2011-05

Christian Witness on the Plateau Vivarais-Lignon: Narrative, Nonviolence, and the Formation of Character

BOSTON UNIVERSITY

SCHOOL OF THEOLOGY

Dissertation

CHRISTIAN WITNESS ON THE PLATEAU VIVARAIS-LIGNON: NARRATIVE, NONVIOLENCE, AND THE FORMATION OF CHARACTER

By

Krishana Oxenford Suckau

(B.A. Point Loma Nazarene University, 2000;
M.T.S. Boston University School of Theology, 2003)

Submitted in partial fulfillment of the

requirements for the degree of

Doctor of Theology

2011

CHRISTIAN WITNESS ON THE PLATEAU VIVARAIS-LIGNON:

NARRATIVE, NONVIOLENCE, AND THE

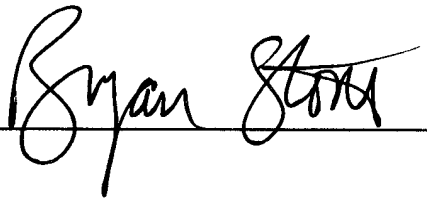
FORMATION OF CHARACTER

By

Krishana Oxenford Suckau

APPROVED

By

First Reader 

Dr. Bryan Stone
Associate Dean of Academic Affairs
E. Stanley Jones Professor of Evangelism

Second Reader 

Dr. John Hart
Professor of Christian Ethics

CONTENTS

CHRISTIAN WITNESS ON THE PLATEAU VIVARAIS-LIGNON:

NARRATIVE, NONVIOLENCE, AND THE

FORMATION OF CHARACTER

(Order No.)

Krishana O. Suckau

Doctor of Theology
Boston University School of Theology, 2011

Major Professor: Bryan P. Stone, Associate Dean of Academic Affairs, E. Stanley Jones Professor of Evangelism

ABSTRACT

This dissertation analyzes the theological and ethical convictions that led the people of the Plateau Vivarais-Lignon to shelter thousands of refugees between 1939 and 1945. It does so by examining the themes of narrative identity, hospitality, character formation, nonviolence, and the contextual witness of church tradition. Though a number of studies have been published about the rescue activity in this region of France during World War II, none have thoroughly analyzed the theological nature of this activity.

Using the Plateau Vivarais-Lignon as a case study in theological ethics, the dissertation draws on historical sources as well as the work of contemporary theologians and ethicists to understand, interpret, and analyze the witness of this community. After situating its rescue and resistance work within the Huguenot narrative of persecution and exile, I examine the theological convictions of the Reformed pastor of Le Chambon-sur-Lignon,

André Trocmé, who played a key role in making the Plateau a place of refuge during the Holocaust. The study highlights the importance of narrative in the actions of this community and discusses the relationship between narrative, character, and ethics. It then examines the nonviolent commitments of key leaders of the rescue effort, using this analysis as a springboard to engage in broader theological reflection about the ethics of nonviolence. After examining the radical hospitality practiced on the Plateau in light of biblical narratives and Reformed history, I investigate the counter-cultural nature of Christian hospitality. The study concludes by analyzing the nature and witness of the church in light of the legacy of the Plateau Vivarais-Lignon.

The dissertation suggests that increased academic and ecclesial attention be given to the relationship between narrative and character, the counter-cultural shape of Christian hospitality, and the active nature of nonviolence. It presents an in-depth analysis of the theological and ethical convictions of the people of the Plateau Vivarais-Lignon, arguing that their witness has ongoing significance for communities of faith as they grapple with how to form disciples, relate to the wider society, welcome strangers, and communicate God's *shalom* in a world of violence.

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

For his continual encouragement, wisdom, and profound care for students I want to thank my major advisor, Dean Bryan Stone. I am immensely grateful to have had such a mentor throughout my graduate studies. An advisor who responds to e-mails within minutes is priceless.

I also want to express my appreciation to Dr. John Hart, who carefully (and quickly) read the manuscript and provided valuable insight and detailed suggestions. I have deep admiration for his convictions as well as his gentle spirit.

For my parents, who have welcomed those in need into their home ever since I can remember, I am profoundly thankful. There is no greater gift a child can receive than a set of loving parents.

Finally, I would like to express my deepest gratitude to my husband, Walter, who has lovingly and sacrificially supported me throughout this process and who daily embodies the convictions about which I write.

CHAPTER ONE

INTRODUCTION

Whosoever saves a single life saves an entire universe.

—Jewish Proverb[1]

Amidst the failure of many Christians to resist the genocidal policies of the Third Reich, the people of Le Chambon-sur-Lignon stand out as a small beacon of hope in an incredibly dark period of history. Le Chambon was a predominantly Protestant community, situated on the Plateau Vivarais-Lignon in France, that sheltered Jewish children and other refugees during the Holocaust.[2] The surrounding area was comprised of twelve small villages, and it is estimated that the residents of this region provided sanctuary to between twenty-five hundred and five thousand refugees.[3] Though there were villagers who

---

[1] A Jewish proverb quoted by Avner Shalev, preface to *The Righteous Among the Nations: Rescuers of the Jews During the Holocaust*, by Mordecai Paldiel (Jerusalem: The Jerusalem Publishing House and Yad Vashem, 2007), viii.

[2] The majority of the Chambonnais were Huguenots (or French Calvinists). Besides the Huguenots, Le Chambon also had a significant population of Darbyites. The Darbyite movement was a branch of the Plymouth Brethren particularly influenced by the theology of John Nelson Darby. The Darbyites were Christians who did not believe in the need for pastors or church buildings. They had a high view of scripture and some scholars suggest that they were particularly hospitable to Jewish refugees because they wanted to get to know the "chosen people" of the Hebrew Bible. See Philip P. Hallie, *Lest Innocent Blood Be Shed: The Story of the Village of Le Chambon and How Goodness Happened There* (New York: Harper & Row, 1979), 182-83. In reference to the Plateau in general, one scholar, Jacques Poujol, has explained that the designation "Plateau Vivarais-Lignon" is a term historians created to make it easier to describe the region, which is actually comprised of seventeen communes and spans two departments. Jacques Poujol, *Protestants dans la France en Guerre, 1939-1945* (Paris: Les Éditions de Paris, 200), 146-147. While the village of Le Chambon is the most famous in the region and was the central locus of rescue work during World War II, using the term "Plateau Vivarais-Lignon" serves as a reminder that other villages and parishes in the area also actively engaged in rescue and resistance activities.

[3] Estimates vary regarding the number of refugees sheltered in Le Chambon. The village pastor, André Trocmé, estimated the number to be twenty-five hundred: see Hallie, 190. Others estimate that it was closer to five thousand: see Susan Zuccotti, "Le Chambon: The Town with a Conscience," in *The Complete*

participated in this endeavor who were not members of the church, the rescue effort was initiated and primarily organized by the Protestant clergy of the village.[4] They were, however, aided in their efforts by several international, French, and Jewish organizations, and collaborating with these organizations was essential to their success. In addition to providing shelter the villagers also helped many refugees escape to Switzerland.

Unfortunately, however, the community on the Plateau stands out as one of only a minimal number of group efforts to protect those hunted by the state. As one of the few Christian communities involved in sheltering refugees, their rescue work is often described as heroic, and it was indeed extraordinary in their context. This raises the question, "Why?" What makes certain communities act in such extraordinary ways, while others do not? Why would the villagers and farmers of the Plateau Vivarais-Lignon open their doors to strangers,

---

History of the Holocaust, ed. Mitchell G. Bard (San Diego: Greenhaven Press, 2001), 334. Some scholars speculate that the estimate of five thousand stems from Oscar Rosowsky's statement that he produced approximately five thousand fake identity papers for people on the Plateau during World War II. Rosowsky has explained, however, that this is not an accurate way of estimating the number of refugees on the Plateau because the papers he produced were not only for refugees but also for members of the *maquis* and other armed resistance groups in the area. Rosowsky, "Les faux papiers d'identité au Chambon-sur-Lignon," in Bolle et al., *Le Plateau Vivarais-Lignon: Accueil et Résistance 1939-1944* (Le Chambon-sur-Lignon: Société d' Histoire de la Montagne, 1992), 244). It is also important to recognize that approximately a third of the refugees were not Jewish. See Patrick Henry, *We Only Know Men: The Rescue of Jews in France During the Holocaust* (Washington, D.C.: The Catholic University of America Press, 2007), 152.

[4] In Chapter Two I will parse out the relationship between the church, the villagers, the surrounding communities on the Plateau, and other Christians in the region. It is important, however, to recognize that the vast majority of residents in Le Chambon were Protestant. As of 1936, ninety-five percent of the residents of the village were Protestant, while only two percent of the general population of France affiliated with Protestant Christianity. On the Plateau as a whole, thirty-eight percent of the population was Protestant. See François Boulet, "Quelques éléments statistiques," in Bolle et al., 287.

and at great personal risk shelter these strangers in their homes for several years, while others kept their doors tightly closed?[5]

In this dissertation I will seek to understand the nature of the rescue work on this plateau in the Haute-Loire region of France, focusing specifically on the theological and ethical convictions that motivated this community to become a place of refuge for those in need. After situating the community within the Huguenot[6] narrative of persecution and exile, I will explore the actions of the villagers in light of theological and ethical themes such as nonviolence, character formation, hospitality, and the witness of the church. I will then analyze these themes in dialogue with other theologians and ethicists. In light of this critical analysis, I will highlight what the people of this remote plateau have to contribute to contemporary discussions about such topics, and point out how their witness might help move these conversations forward.

A Map of the Terrain

Prior to the arrival of the first refugees, the people of Le Chambon and the surrounding communities already knew a great deal about persecution. The Chambonnais were primarily Huguenot, and as Huguenots they were keenly aware that many of their ancestors had been persecuted for their religious beliefs. Magda Trocmé, the wife of the

---

[5] It is beyond the scope of this dissertation to explore why so many churches did not help those who were being persecuted by the policies of the Third Reich. This dissertation will instead focus on the theological and ethical underpinnings of one community that did help.

[6] According to Philip Benedict the term Huguenot is "a name evidently derived from a ghost said to haunt the region of Amboise at night and applied by their enemies to the Protestants because of their nocturnal gatherings and evil doings." *Christ's Churches Purely Reformed: A Social History of Calvinism* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2002), 143.

village pastor, explains that it was this history that prepared them for what they did.[7] Because their ancestors had been persecuted, they were ready to extend hospitality and compassion to refugees in need. In this dissertation I will therefore draw on the work of church historians such as Philip Benedict and Heiko Oberman to understand the Huguenot narrative of persecution and diaspora.[8]

The Huguenot narrative made the soil on the Plateau fertile for rescue and resistance, but it was André Trocmé, the Protestant pastor of Le Chambon, who planted the seeds. Because Trocmé played such an integral role in initiating and organizing the rescue efforts on the Plateau, the third chapter of this dissertation will begin by focusing on Trocmé's theological and ethical formation. It will then explore his beliefs about Christ, his understanding of the kingdom of God, and his ideas about ethics in order to understand the convictions that led him to make the Plateau Vivarais-Lignon a place of refuge.

After situating this community in its historical context and examining the theological beliefs of André Trocmé I will explore the role of narrative[9] in theological ethics and the

---

[7] Pierre Sauvage, *Weapons of the Spirit*, DVD (Los Angeles: The Chambon Foundation, 1989). Though her role is usually not emphasized as much as her husband's, some scholars suggest that Magda had an equally important part in the rescue activities of Le Chambon: see Zuccotti in *The Complete History of the Holocaust*, 335.

[8] Heiko Oberman argues that while reformers such as Luther and Zwingli agreed with Augustine's belief that the diaspora of postbiblical Judaism was a sign of God's wrath upon the Jews, Calvin and his early followers questioned this reasoning, as many Reformed Christians were also forced into exile because of their religious beliefs. Heiko A. Oberman, *The Two Reformations: The Journey from the Last Days to the New World*, ed. Donald Weinstein (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2003) 83-84, 148-49. This theme will be explored in Chapter Two in an effort to understand the historical context of rescue and resistance on the Plateau.

[9] Here I am using the word narrative to describe both: a) the way the narrative of their Huguenot ancestors' persecution affected this community, as well as b) the role of the biblical narrative of Israel and Jesus in forming the ethical convictions of this community. In using this term I am drawing on the work of theologians such as Stanley Hauerwas and James William McClendon.

importance of such narratives in shaping ethical behavior and ecclesial praxis. I will seek to interpret the actions of this community in terms of current theological discussions about narrative, as well as examine how the events that occurred on the Plateau Vivarais-Lignon might advance the conversation. Exploring the tension between the narrative of the nation-state and the narrative with which the Chambonnais identified, I will highlight the way human lives are claimed by many narratives as well as the importance of discerning which narrative(s) should be primary. Likewise, I will explore the function of liturgy as an enacted narrative. It is my preliminary thesis that a particular religious narrative was very important in shaping this community's ethics and that understanding the role of narrative in ethics continues to be important for churches today.

Related to the theme of communal narrative is the topic of Christian character. Philip Hallie recounts that in almost every interview he did with the villagers of Le Chambon, at some point they would say, "'It was the most natural thing in the world to help these people.'"[10] Certainly their actions were not natural in that the vast majority of people in war-torn Europe did not act in the same way. This raises the question of what the villagers mean when they say their behavior was "natural." It is my preliminary thesis that their use of the word natural speaks to the topic of character formation, and therefore the formation of Christian character is one of the topics I will explore in this dissertation, focusing particularly on how the process of formation ties back to communal narrative.[11] I will do so by looking

[10] Hallie, *Lest Innocent Blood Be Shed*, 21.

[11] I am using the term "formation" to describe the ecclesial nature of Christian growth in the life of faith and discipleship.

at the role of small groups, the family, the church, and education in character formation. In doing so, this dissertation will make connections between character formation and the idea of living into an alternative story.

Part of how the people of the Plateau expressed their character was through nonviolent resistance. The Chambonnais were not only committed to sheltering refugees, they were also committed to nonviolence. This conviction was largely due to the influence of their pastors. From the pulpit, André Trocmé and Éduoard Theis, who served as pastors of Le Chambon prior to and during the war, delivered sermons on resistance.[12] They spoke forthrightly about the evil nature of ethnic and religious persecution.[13] Trocmé and Theis delivered one of their most famous sermons of resistance the Sunday after France surrendered to the Nazis. They told the congregation,

> The duty of Christians is to use the weapons of the Spirit to oppose the violence that they will try to put on our consciences. We appeal to all our brothers in Christ to refuse to cooperate with this violence . . .
>
> Loving, forgiving, and doing good to our adversaries is our duty. Yet we must do this without giving up, and without being cowardly. We shall resist whenever our adversaries demand of us obedience contrary to the orders of the gospel. We shall do so without fear, but also without pride and without hate.[14]

In this dissertation I therefore plan to explore more deeply the community's theological and ethical convictions about nonviolence. In examining their theological convictions about

---

[12] André Trocmé began pastoring the Reformed church in Le Chambon in 1934 and Éduoard Theis came on staff as a part-time pastor in 1938.

[13] Zuccotti in *The Complete History of the Holocaust*, 335.

[14] Trocmé's and Theis's sermon of June 23, 1940, from the Magda and André Trocmé Papers, Swarthmore College Library, Peace Collection; quoted in Charles Moore, introduction to *Jesus and the Nonviolent Revolution*, by André Trocmé, revised and expanded edition (New York: Orbis Books, 2003), xii.

nonviolence I will engage the dilemma between faithfulness and effectiveness as well as explore the active nature of pacifism. In light of these themes this dissertation will also point to the role of theological imagination in nonviolent witness. It is my preliminary thesis that nonviolence was an important part of the distinctive theology and ethics of this community, and was related to their work of sheltering refugees as one of their "weapons of the Spirit."[15]

The religious leaders of the Protestant Temple did not simply preach nonviolence.[16] They practiced an active pacifism in which they welcomed refugees into their community in the face of great personal danger. More than anything else the people of the Plateau-Vivarais-Lignon are remembered for their radical hospitality. This dissertation will therefore seek to understand this practice by first exploring the nature and infrastructure of hospitality on the Plateau. Because many of the Chambonnais were shaped by the biblical narrative, this dissertation will also trace the theme of hospitality in the Hebrew Bible and New Testament. In an effort to understand the Huguenot tradition of hospitality it will track what John Calvin had to say on the topic. After exploring the theme of hospitality in scripture, the early church, and in the writings of John Calvin, this dissertation will engage several contemporary theologians who grapple with this theme in an effort to understand how the community of Le Chambon can help move forward contemporary conversations about hospitality as an ecclesial practice.

---

[15] "Weapons of the Spirit" is the title of Pierre Sauvage's documentary about Le Chambon.

[16] During periods of Catholic rule in France Protestants were not allowed to call their buildings "churches." Instead these buildings were commonly called "temples."

Finally, this dissertation will explore the witness of the church. Ecclesiological and theological distinctiveness were very important in this community's ability to witness. Susan Zuccotti explains that many French Protestants, "especially those of the assimilated and highly educated urban classes who were more removed from their historical and cultural roots, were favorably inclined to the Vichy regime."[17] In Le Chambon, however, the Protestants remained largely unassimilated and kept the memories of their ancestors alive. Because of their distinctive identity, some people referred to the village as the "'republic of Le Chambon.'"[18] In addition to being fairly isolated geographically, this community's sense of distinctiveness was also ecclesiological and theological, and played an important role in making the villagers less susceptible to state ideology, therefore making them more willing to help those who were victimized by that ideology. This sense of distinctiveness is related to another important aspect of the witness of the church – theological vision. Throughout the war the pastors retained a theological vision that helped them see clearly what was happening and act with a sense of conviction. This sense of vision played a critical role in their ecclesial witness. In light of the themes of theological vision and distinctiveness, this chapter will then explore the metaphor of the church as an "embassy of the reign of God." In sum, through exploring themes such as nonviolence, narrative, formation, and the relationship between the church and the wider world, I hope to get to the heart of this

---

[17] Zuccotti in *The Complete History of the Holocaust*, 335. The Vichy regime was the name of the French government after France surrendered to the Nazis in 1940. It was essentially a puppet state.

[18] Hallie, *Lest Innocent Blood Be Shed*, 30.

community's theology and ethics, and to point to ways the story of Le Chambon might have significance for religious communities who may be grappling with similar issues today.

Method of Investigation

My method of investigation will involve reviewing primary and secondary sources related to the community of Le Chambon and critically analyzing them through the lenses of theology and ethics. The major studies of Le Chambon include: Philip Hallie's book *Lest Innocent Blood Be Shed: The Story of Le Chambon and How Goodness Happened There*,[19] *Le Plateau Vivarais-Lignon: Accueil et Résistance 1939-1944* published by the Société d'Histoire de la Montagne, and a dissertation written by Christine van der Zanden titled *Plateau of Hospitality: Jewish Refugee Life on the Plateau Vivarais-Lignon.* Two other important texts are *Magda et André Trocmé: Figures de resistances* by Pierre Boismorand and *We Only Know Men: The Rescue of Jews in France during the Holocaust* by Patrick Gerard Henry. While I will draw on these sources in order to understand the nature of the rescue activities on the Plateau, this dissertation will not be primarily historical in nature, but will rather seek to analyze these historical events through the lenses of ethics and theology. In order to examine this community's ethics and theology, this study will draw on the texts mentioned above as well as the theological and

[19] Philip Hallie's book *Lest Innocent Blood Be Shed: The Story of Le Chambon and How Goodness Happened There* was the first major study published about the rescue and resistance activities that occurred in the village during World War II. In the years following its publication certain aspects of Hallie's description have been called into question. For example, some have criticized him for focusing too much on André Trocmé and the village of Le Chambon, and not giving enough attention to other villages and people involved in the rescue effort. Another major criticism of Hallie's work is that he gives credit to a German officer named Major Julius Schmäling for having protected the area during World War II. This idea, however, has been disputed by some involved in the rescue effort and is specifically discussed in Magda Trocmé, Madeleine Barot, Pierre Fayol, and O. Rosowsky, "Le Mythe du commandant SS protecteur des Juifs," *Le Monde Juif*, April-June 1988, 61-69. For an overview of some of these debates see Patrick Gerard Henry, *We Only Know Men: The Rescue of Jews in France During the Holocaust* (Washington D.C.: The Catholic University of America Press, 2007).

ethical reflection of various thinkers who work at the intersections of ecclesiology, character formation, narrative, hospitality, and nonviolence – namely, John Howard Yoder, Stanley Hauerwas, Christine Pohl, Mark Nation, Samuel Wells, N. T. Wright, Darrell Guder, George Lindback, Amy Oden, William Cavanaugh, and Bryan Stone. In doing so, my research will advance the scholarship in the field by moving beyond the historical nature of the major accounts of Le Chambon, and focusing on the theological and ethical aspects of this community's actions. Through this analysis I will draw conclusions about what today's churches can learn from the theological and ethical convictions of this group of people from the Haute-Loire region of France.

The primary source materials I have consulted for this project include several books written by André Trocmé, interviews with the villagers from a documentary by Pierre Sauvage titled *Weapons of the Spirit*, the André and Magda Trocmé papers located in the Swarthmore Peace Collection at Swarthmore College, and letters and other documents located at the Congregational Library of the American Congregational Association in Boston.

The secondary sources I will use to critically analyze the events that occurred in Le Chambon will primarily be theological reflection in the areas of ecclesiology and ethics using the work of theologians previously mentioned, who will play particularly important roles in providing the theoretical foundations through which I engage the themes of narrative, nonviolence, formation, hospitality, and the witness of the church. I will also draw on the work of church historians such as Philip Benedict and Heiko Oberman in order to situate the community of Le Chambon within the tradition of Reformed Protestantism and to

understand how that tradition influenced this community's ideas about persecution, exile, refugees, Judaism, and church-state relations.

The Boundaries of Significance

While it is my contention that churches today can continue to learn from this community, there are certainly limits to the degree that this is so. For one, the Plateau Vivarais-Lignon is fairly isolated geographically, and it is likely that this geographic isolation contributed to their ability to become a place of refuge on several levels. Because of their location atop a plateau, it was somewhat easy for the villagers to see when someone was approaching by car and send warning if they suspected danger. In this sense the geography itself proved amicable for hiding refugees. Further, while this geographic isolation made it easier to recognize approaching danger, it likely also contributed to the theological and ecclesial distinctiveness of this community. Because they lived in a rather remote area, the people of Le Chambon were less assimilated into the wider mores and values of society. As Susan Zuccotti explains, the Protestants who were more assimilated into the wider culture, and disconnected from their historical roots, were more favorably inclined toward the Vichy regime.[20] This sense of geographic isolation therefore very likely contributed to the distinctiveness of the ethical and theological convictions of this community. This raises questions of applicability and appropriation, as most Christians today do not live in such isolated communities.

---

[20] Zuccotti, *The Complete History of the Holocaust*, 335.

Another limitation to this type of research involves the personal and emotional involvement in researching rescue activities during the Holocaust. While all theology is done from a particular location, and all scholars bring certain lenses and agendas to their research, it could be argued that the nature of research about the Holocaust necessitates emotional involvement. Whether this is a limitation or not is debatable, but it is important to point out that several key sources of information regarding Le Chambon acknowledge a sense of personal implication with the subject at hand. For example, Philip Hallie, the author of *Lest Blood Be Shed* explains that he was on the verge of depression because of his research on the Holocaust, but that studying Le Chambon saved him from despair.[21] Likewise, one of the major documentaries about Le Chambon was directed by Pierre Sauvage, who was born in Le Chambon to parents who sought refuge there during the war. While Sauvage's documentary primarily involves interviewing villagers, his interest in the community is undoubtedly personal.

A third limitation to this type of research revolves around the clandestine nature of rescue and resistance efforts during the Holocaust. Essential to the success of these efforts was their secretive nature. Most information was communicated by word of mouth and details that were written down were usually stashed securely in undisclosed locations. For their protection the Jewish refugees were often given alternative names and birthdates during

---

[21] Hallie, *Lest Innocent Blood Be Shed*, 1-4, 12. Hallie also acknowledges that he does not intend to tell the story of Le Chambon like a normal historian, as he is primarily interested in the moral implications of the story. See Hallie, 7. Likewise, it could be argued that Hallie tends to sensationalize André Trocmé's role in the rescue activities, and that this skews the historical accuracy of his account. See André Trocmé, *Jesus and the Nonviolent Revolution*, rev. and expanded ed., ed. Charles E. Moore (Maryknoll, NY: Orbis Books, 2004), 182n1.

their stay. Likewise, at the end of the war the Germans destroyed a great deal of material evidence, including documents directly pertaining to rescue and resistance efforts on the Plateau.[22] Because of the clandestine nature of the activities on the Plateau, the historical data that is available is largely based on memoirs and interviews from the postwar period.

The Importance of the Study

Undergirding this project is the conviction that the community of Le Chambon can provide critical insights for religious communities and their leaders as they struggle to discern what it means to live out the Christian faith in the world today. Churches today continue to face questions about how to witness to the peace of Christ in a world of violence, how ecclesial identity relates to national identity, how to form disciples, how to practice hospitality, and what it means to witness to the reign of God. I would argue that the extraordinary actions of this community during World War II lend it a sense of moral credibility, and therefore should ensure this community a place at the table in such discussions.

In my dissertation I therefore plan to use this community as a springboard from which to engage further discussion of these issues. In each chapter I will first explore how this community understood such themes as nonviolence, character, hospitality, and the witness of the church, and then bring other theologians and scholars into dialogue about

[22] Christine E. van der Zanden explains, "German documents, used in many studies on Vichy France to illuminate the history of the occupation, are especially scarce in relation to Chambon. For example, the closest Gestapo headquarters were in Clermont-Ferrand, and the materials from these offices were burned during the liberation." "The Plateau of Hospitality: Jewish Refugee Life on the Plateau Vivarais-Lignon" (PhD diss., Clark University, 2003), 7. See August Rivet, "Relations des autorités d'occupation avec les autorités locales et la population," *Le Plateau Vivarais-Lignon*, ed. Pierre Bolle, 272.

these topics in order to discern how the actions of this community move the conversation forward. This project will therefore advance scholarship in the fields of theology, ethics, and ecclesiology, in that it will first seek to understand the theology, ethics, and ecclesiology of this community, then bring other scholars into the discussion, and finally explore the implications for religious communities facing similar issues in comparable contemporary contexts.

Likewise, this dissertation will further the scholarship in the field precisely because it is based on a case study. Ecclesiological and ethical reflection can sometimes appear to occur in a vacuum and not be connected to real communities and their practices. One of the major critiques of thinkers such as Stanley Hauerwas is that the church he describes simply does not exist. This dissertation will seek to understand a community that actually did exist, and explore the theology and ethics that shaped their life together. It will be a study of the relationship between theology and praxis, and by examining the lived history of this community it will further the discussion about the relationship between theological convictions and embodied ecclesial witness in particular social contexts.

Further, this dissertation will contribute to understanding the community of Le Chambon as it will specifically focus on the theology and ethics of this community. While there have been several studies of Le Chambon, these studies have primarily been historical in nature, and have not significantly focused on the theological and ethical convictions of

this village.[23] This dissertation will therefore advance the scholarship about this particular community by seeking specifically to understand the theology and ethics that motivated the villagers and farmers to open their doors to strangers.

[23] It could be argued that Philip Hallie's book, *Lest Innocent Blood Be Shed*, is an exception to this statement. Hallie does highlight some of the ethical and theological convictions of the community. His study of this community's theology and ethics is, however, not extensive, and lacks the depth for which I will aim. For example, Hallie attributes André Trocmé's commitment to nonviolence to the idea that every human life is precious. While Trocmé agrees that every human life is precious, I would argue that his ideas about nonviolence are much more Christological in nature, as he wrote an entire book called *Jesus and the Nonviolent Revolution* (which Hallie does not mention). I therefore plan to do a more in depth analysis of Trocmé's understanding of nonviolence than Hallie does in *Lest Innocent Blood Be Shed.*

CHAPTER TWO

THE PLATEAU VIVARAIS-LIGNON: THE HISTORICAL LOCATION OF RESCUE AND RESISTANCE

We have no other place of refuge than his providence.

—John Calvin[24]

The village of Le Chambon is situated atop a plateau, and this location is part of what made it an amicable place for rescue and resistance. It was, however, also theologically situated within the Huguenot narrative of exile and persecution, and this narrative is what made the ground atop the Plateau fertile for such efforts. This chapter will therefore start by seeking to explore this narrative, beginning with its founder, John Calvin. It will then trace the history of hospitality on the Plateau and point out how previous infrastructures of hospitality were important to the rescue activities that occurred there during the war. After exploring the historical and theological context of the hospitality extended by the Chambonnais, this chapter will provide a basic overview of the rescue efforts that took place on the Plateau from 1939-1945.

[24] John Calvin quoted in Heiko A. Oberman, *The Two Reformations: The Journey from the Last Days to the New World*, ed. Donald Weinstein (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2003), 150.

John Calvin and the Reformation of the Refugees[25]

John Calvin experienced numerous periods of displacement during his own life and his interactions with religious refugees had great impact on his theology and ethics. To this end some scholars have argued that Calvin's doctrine of predestination cannot be understood apart from the Huguenot experience of exile and have labeled Calvin not simply one of the founders of the Reformation, but more specifically the father of the "Reformation of the Refugees." Followers of the Reformed tradition were frequently harassed for their faith and these experiences often drove them across Europe and sometimes even to the New World.[26] The Oxford English Dictionary even connects the emergence of the English word "refugee" with the influx of Huguenots into England during the seventeenth century.[27] This section will therefore seek to explore how experiences of displacement (both Calvin's personal experiences and that of his followers) shaped Calvin's theology and ethics in order to understand the Huguenot tradition of which Le Chambon is a part.

Persecution forced Calvin to flee his homeland, leaving France for Basel, Switzerland in 1536. He was then invited to help reform Geneva, but his suggestions proved to be unpopular to the city council, and not long after that he was expelled from Geneva. He was

---

[25] Church Historian Heiko Oberman uses the phrase "Reformation of the Refugees" to describe the Calvinist Reformation. For example, see Heiko A. Oberman, "Europa afflicta: The Reformation of the Refugees,"*Archiv für Reformationsgeschichte* 83 (1992): 91-111.

[26] Oberman, *The Two Reformations*, 72.

[27] *Oxford English Dictionary*, s.v. "Refugee." The English term "refugee" stems from the French term "*réfugier*," which means to seek shelter.

eventually able to return to Geneva in 1541, but prior to that Calvin spent three years in Strasbourg ministering to a congregation of French refugees. This time was very significant to his own theological development and reflection on the nature of the church. Heiko Oberman explains that it was in Strasbourg that Calvin "caught a vision of the church of Christ in diaspora."[28] This sense of being a church in diaspora shaped Calvin's future reflections on the nature of the church and how it should relate to the wider world. Oberman goes on to argue that it was in Strasbourg that Calvin "discovered a new mark of the church (*nota ecclesiae*): the authentic church of Christ, like the people of the Jews, is persecuted and dispersed."[29]

Heiko Oberman also argues that Calvin's doctrine of predestination cannot be understood apart from the Huguenot experience of diaspora. He explains:

> Predestination is an excellent example of a teaching which, however well and extensively documented with precise quotations, cannot be grasped unless one has an eye for its social and psychological roots. This apparently abstract doctrine was a matter of existential faith for the exiles who, far from home, in a language arising from their experience of banishment, 'traveled through the wilderness.' Even as they went 'behind the pillar of fire,' they clung to the providential guidance of God.[30]

The Calvinist doctrine of predestination therefore has to be understood in relation to its historical context: the experience of persecution, sojourn, and exile that characterized the lives of many of Calvin's followers. The doctrine gave refugees a sense that even though they

---

[28] Oberman, *The Two Reformations*, 147.

[29] Ibid., 148.

[30] Ibid., 118.

might face persecution, God was with them and would help them to be faithful. Oberman describes the connection between persecution and predestination as he writes:

> The Calvinist doctrine of predestination is the mighty bulwark of the Christian faithful against the fear that they will be unable to hold out against the pressure of persecution. Election is the Gospel's encouragement to those who have faith, not a message of doom for those who lack it. In particular, it responds to the anguish that Calvin already felt in the early wave of persecution, which spread through Paris on the eve of his escape to Switzerland fearing that torture would force him to betray the other members of his underground cell.[31] Rather than providing grounds for arrogance, predestination offers all true Christians the hope that even under extreme duress they will persevere to the end.[32] Later, when the refugees had become settlers and citizens, they developed the scriptural insights fostered by this experience into a systematic theology that lost touch with its initial purpose and hardened its doctrinal crust.[33]

In order to adequately and accurately understand the doctrine of predestination it is therefore critical to place it in its historical context.[34] It gave refugees a sense of reassurance that God would help them persevere through the travails and trials they faced. It was meant to provide a sense of encouragement, not to foster a spirit of arrogance. Through their difficult journeys it provided religious refugees a sense of comfort and consolation. It is in

---

[31] See Oberman, "Europa Afflicta."

[32] See Heiko A. Oberman, *De Erfenis van Calvijn: Grootheid en Grenzen* (Kampen: J. H. Kok, 1988).

[33] Oberman, *The Two Reformations*, 114-115.

[34] Oberman explains in *The Two Reformations*, "Calvin, on the other hand, spelled out Scripture in the light of the persecution of the church and addressed his letters, commentaries, and sermons to the afflicted churches. Their members, eyes darkened by blood and tears, could not see a thing of God's omnipotence and faithfulness and, against all the evidence of their senses, clung only to that one Word: the Lord knows those who are his; he will not forsake the work of his hands. *Outside of this context Calvin's doctrine of election is not only abhorrent but also ungodly. But within this horizon of experience it is a precious experiential asset* which churches subject to persecution can only dispense with to their great detriment" (164-65).

this context that Calvin's statement that "We have no other place of refuge than his providence"[35] can be understood.

The doctrine of predestination also provided refugees with a sense of identity. The identity of one fleeing religious persecution was not marked by national citizenship, but rather by the certainty of one's name being "inscribed in the book of God (*praedestinatio*)."[36] The refugee's citizenship was thus located in God's kingdom, or the heavenly city, and on earth one could not expect to find a friendly or permanent home. This sentiment is expressed in one of Calvin's prayers: "Since You promised us rest nowhere but in Your heavenly kingdom, so grant, almighty God, that on our earthly pilgrimage we may consent not to have an abiding city but to be driven here and there, and despite all that still call upon You with a quiet spirit."[37]

The Reformed doctrine of predestination therefore cannot be understood apart from the Huguenot history of persecution and exile. But how is this history related specifically to the people of the Plateau sheltering Jewish refugees? Throughout this dissertation I will suggest that awareness of their own history made the Chambonnais more empathetic to the situation of religious refugees.

---

[35] John Calvin quoted in Oberman, *The Two Reformations*, 150.

[36] Oberman, *The Two Reformations*, 72. He explains later in this book, "For those who had no permanent place of residence, not even a fixed stone on which to lay their heads, neither a valid passport nor a residence permit, predestination became their identity card. Called *providential specialissima* by Calvin, this doctrine was experienced in a special way as 'being led by God's hand,' trusting 'his plan for history,' and protected 'under his wise guidance.' These key expressions became code words belonging to faith and experience in the diaspora, to *life* in dispersion, in the search for *survival* amid a triumphant Counter Reformation" (157).

[37] Quoted in Oberman, *The Two Reformations*, 119.

Some scholars draw a connection between Huguenot history and a specific sense of respect for and empathy toward Judaism that dates back several centuries. For example, because of their own experience of persecution and exile some Calvinist Christians questioned the anti-Jewish assumptions of classical Christian theology. Heiko Oberman explains:

> The first stirrings of respect for postbiblical Judaism appear not in the milieu of Luther's Reformation but in the very different world of international Protestantism, which was shaped by that other Reformation of the Refugees. The men and women of this movement learned to question the hoary Augustinian saying that the 'Christkillers' ostensibly carry the wrath of God by the very fact that they live lives of instability with no country of their own. In the experience of flight and persecution, the reformed refugees started to read the Scriptures with fresh insight. The Old Testament, restored as an authoritative part of the Scriptures, was recovered as the travel guide for the faithful trekking from land to land without any other papers than a heavenly passport.[38]

While classical Augustinian theology claimed the homelessness of the Jews was a sign of God's wrath for killing Christ, Calvinist Christians were beginning to experience this same sense of homelessness, and thus called into question the Augustinian connection between lack of a permanent home and God's anger. Luther and Zwingli affirmed the Augustinian idea that the absence of a Jewish homeland demonstrated God's wrath upon the Jews, but over time Calvinist Christians realized that they could no longer share this sentiment. As they began to be forced from their homelands they realized that having no permanent residence was not a sign of the wrath of God. Oberman continues:

> Now that Protestants had to leave their patria and flee for their lives before emperor and king, they had to let go of this argument. In a totally new way the parallel

---

[38] Oberman, *The Two Reformations*, 83-84.

> between God's dispersed people of the old covenant and those of the new was brought home to them. . . . While in 1520 all theologians regarded the diaspora as the evidence of Jewish guilt, fifty years later this argument had completely disappeared from the anti-Jewish arsenal of Calvinism.[39]

It is difficult to assess the degree to which this directly impacted the attitudes and actions of the Chambonnais, but it is certainly an important part of their religious history and pertinent to the topic at hand. Huguenots developed a more empathetic understanding of Judaism than other major branches of reformation Christianity. They saw their own story of religious sojourn in the Hebrew narrative and this fostered a renewed sense of respect for and empathy toward Judaism. In writing about the Plateau Vivarais-Lignon, Patrick Cabanel poignantly explains, "The Hebrews had been there for four centuries, when the Jews arrived."[40]

Another important development in the religious history of the region, specifically in regard to Jewish-Christian relations, was the emergence of the Darbyite movement.[41] Scholars trace the emergence of this movement in the region back to the mid-1800s: appearing in the 1840s in the Ardèche and in the 1850s near Vastres.[42] The movement got its

---

[39] Oberman, *The Two Reformations*, 148-49.

[40] Patrick Cabanel, "L'Israël des Cévennes, réflexions sur une «exception huguenote» face aux juifs," in Patrick Cabanel and Laurent Gervereau, *La Deuxième Guerre mondiale, des terres de refuge aux musées* (Le Chambon-sur-Lignon: Sivom Vivarais-Lignon, 2003), 212, quoted in Patrick Gerard Henry, *We Only Know Men: The Rescue of Jews in France during the Holocaust* (Washington D.C.: The Catholic University Press of America, 2007), 28.

[41] The Darbyites were a branch of the Plymouth Brethren. The Salvation Army, known for its social outreach, was another religious group that was active in the region.

[42] See Christine van der Zanden, "The Plateau of Hospitality: Jewish Refugee Life on the Plateau Vivarais-Lignon" (PhD diss., Clark University, 2003), 27.

name from a nineteenth century English preacher named John Darby. The Darbyites focused on the individual's connection to God and did not believe in the need for pastors or intermediaries. They also had a very high view of scripture, and reportedly had large portions of the Bible memorized. The Darbyites eventually became very much involved in the rescue work on the Plateau, and expressed a deep sense of respect for those of the Jewish faith. In contrast to Christian supercessionism, they reportedly believed that the Jews continued to be God's chosen people.[43] Sources suggest that this made them very happy to help the Jews, and Philip Hallie recounts a story that demonstrates the sense of respect the Darbyites apparently had for Jewish refugees. He writes:

> Once, early in the Occupation, a German-Jewish refugee came to a Darbyste farm to buy some eggs on the unrationed "gray" market of the distant farms. She was invited into the kitchen. Quietly the woman who has invited her in asked, with the light of interest in her eyes, "You – you are Jewish?"
>
> The woman, who had been tortured for her Jewishness, stepped back trembling, and she became even more frightened when the farm woman ran to the steps leading upstairs and called up, "Husband, children, come down, come down!"
>
> But her fright disappeared when the woman added, while her family was coming down the steps, "Look, look, my family! We have in our house now a *representative of the Chosen People*!"[44]

There seems to have been some degree of respect for Judaism both within the Huguenot narrative and Darbyite theology. This alone cannot account for the willingness of the Chambonnais to open their doors to persecuted Jewish refugees, but it was likely a

---

[43]Deborah Durland DeSaix and Karen Gray Ruelle, *Hidden on the Mountain: Stories of Children Sheltered from the Nazis in Le Chambon* (New York: Holyday House, 2007), 173.

[44] Philip P. Hallie, *Lest Innocent Blood Be Shed: The Story of the Village of Le Chambon and How Goodness Happened There* (New York: Harper & Row, 1979), 183.

contributing factor. This sense of connection with Judaism was an organic compound of the soil atop the Plateau that made it fertile for rescue and resistance activity.

The Journey through the Desert

Having begun to explore the connection between the religious history of the Plateau and the willingness of the Chambonnais to shelter refugees, this section will pursue that history on a deeper level, specifically focusing on the persecution and exile that many Huguenots experienced from the sixteenth century on. While France was a relatively united country at the beginning of the sixteenth century, conflict between Protestants and Catholics soon began to increase, marking the 1500s as a century of religious division and tension. Following the whims of kings and nobility, we will trace the history of tension between Protestants and Catholics that culminated in the Saint Bartholomew's Day Massacre of 1572, a story of which many Chambonnais were aware. We will then follow the church as it went underground and into a very difficult period know as the "desert."[45] The memory of this persecution was a part of the collective consciousness of the Plateau Vivarais-Lignon, and part of what contributed to their willingness to help those persecuted for their faith. This section will therefore explore the major turning points of the conflict between Protestants and Catholics in an effort to better understand Huguenot consciousness.[46]

---

[45] The use of the term "desert" to describe this period points to the resonance the Huguenots felt with the Jews of the Hebrew Bible. See Patrick Gerard Henry, *We Only Know Men*, 28.

[46] See Lesley Maber's *Bundle of the Living* for an overview of these developments. André Trocmé and Magda Trocmé Papers, Swarthmore College Peace Collection, Swarthmore, PA.

Francis I ruled France at the beginning of the Reformation and his policies toward Protestantism vacillated back and forth between moderate acceptance and persecution. For example, Francis encouraged the spread of Protestantism in Germany in an apparent effort to undermine the power of his political rival, Charles V. Though he did not necessarily want to see Protestantism expand in France, he did show a degree of acceptance toward Protestants because of his desire to see it spread in Germany. His policies, however, were based on political strategies and therefore Protestants also faced periods of persecution under Francis I. Despite these periods of persecution Protestantism gained converts, though many were also forced into exile at this time - John Calvin being among those forced to flee.[47] Things continued to go downhill for Protestants when Francis I's son, Henry II, ascended to the throne in 1547 after his father passed away. Once in power he increased the level of persecution against those who aligned themselves with the Reformation. Despite this persecution, the first Protestant church was officially organized during this period and a national synod of churches secretly met near Paris.

Political tension continued in France, and the treatment of Protestants was subject to the whims of the various competitors for political power. In 1562 Huguenots were granted the freedom to worship, though they were not allowed to own their own places of worship, were required to get permits to gather in synods, were not allowed to collect funds, and were not allowed to support an army.[48] This new-found, though limited, freedom was endorsed by

---

[47] Justo L. González, *The Reformation to the Present Day*, vol. 2 of *The Story of Christianity* (San Francisco: HarperCollins Publishers, 1985), 102.

[48] Ibid., 104.

the reigning king, the very young son of Catherine de Medici, in an effort to gain Protestant support against the politically powerful Catholic house of Guise.[49] However, two of the Guise brothers responded by gathering two hundred armed noblemen, surrounding a stable where Huguenots were worshipping, and killing as many as possible. This massacre, which occurred in the village of Vassy, was to be the first of a number of battles between political forces aligned with either Protestantism or Catholicism. This culminated in the St. Bartholomew's Day massacre, which occurred during the night of August 24, 1572. Approximately two thousand Huguenots were killed in Paris, and some forced to deny their faith in order to save their own lives. This was the beginning of more widespread persecution, as the Duke of Guise gave instructions that the massacre should be repeated through the various parts of the empire. The number of Huguenots executed climbed to the thousands.[50] After the massacre periods of limited rights as well as periods of persecution continued to occur. Following several decades of religious wars, Henry IV (who had converted back and forth several times between Protestantism and Catholicism) issued the Edict of Nantes in 1598, which gave Huguenots freedom to worship in all places where they already had churches, besides Paris. He also granted them possession of their fortified towns and allowed them renewed access to schools, charitable organizations, and royal offices.[51]

---

[49] González, *The Reformation to the Present Day*, 104 – 105.

[50] See Philip Benedict, *Christ's Churches Purely Reformed: A Social History of Calvinism* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2002), 144-146. See also González, *The Reformation to the Present Day*, 106-107.

[51] Benedict, *Christ's Churches*, 147-148. González, *The Reformation to the Present Day*, 109.

The Huguenots' right to possess their fortified towns did not, however, prove to be lasting, as their political power came to be seen as a threat to the future king. By 1629 their fortified cities were taken. Without these cities they were no longer perceived as a threat, which led to a renewed edict of toleration towards Protestants in France. Protestants then enjoyed a period of religious tolerance, until King Louis XIV came of age and developed a strong desire to stamp out dissidents of any sort, including Protestants. Consequently, Protestants faced increased pressure to convert back to Catholicism, and Louis XIV eventually even used the French army to force the conversion of tens of thousands.[52] This culminated in the revocation of the Edict of Nantes in 1685, which made it illegal to be a Protestant in France. The revocation of the Edict of Nantes led to a mass exodus of Protestants out of France; approximately 200,000 Huguenots fled to places like Switzerland, Germany, England, the Netherlands, and North America.[53]

While "officially" there were no longer any Protestants in France, Huguenots continued to gather clandestinely for worship.[54] They no longer had church buildings so they met in fields and wooded areas under the cover of night to listen to scripture and the sermon, confess their sins, and share the bread and body of Christ. These gatherings were called "Assemblée du Désert."[55] The government usually had difficulty figuring out where

---

[52] González, *The Reformation to the Present Day*, 144-45. Benedict, *Christ's Churches*, 372.

[53] Benedict, *Christ's Churches*, 373-374. González, *The Reformation to the Present Day*, 145. It is also important to recognize that when the people of the Plateau Vivarais-Lignon guided refugees hundreds of kilometers to the neutral country of Switzerland they were leading them on a journey that many of their own ancestors had taken. See Henry, *We Only Know Men*, 28.

[54] Benedict, *Christ's Churches*, 376-377.

these meetings were, but when they did find out they waited until all the worshippers had arrived before arresting them. The penalties for attending such services were severe: women were sentenced to life in prison and men were taken to the galleys. Children were sent to Catholic foster homes in an effort to reorient and convert them, and pastors were often killed. For example, one preacher, named Mathieu Duny, was sentenced to life in the galleys during this period, and another, Mathieu Morel, was arrested and executed in 1739. Pastor Mathieu Majal was arrested in Le Chambon and hanged in Montpellier in 1746.[56] Some Huguenots, known as the Camisards, took up arms and rebelled; many of them were eventually captured and executed.[57] In 1726 the Huguenots founded a seminary in exile in Lausanne, Switzerland, and from there a number of seminarians were trained to return to France for clandestine ministry. This period became known as the "desert," and despite the government's efforts to stamp out the Protestant movement the faithful continued to gather and most held strong to their beliefs.[58] Though persecution continued, Reformed Protestantism gained firm roots in France and in 1787 Louis XVI finally issued a decree of religious tolerance. Justo González summarizes these events as he writes, "During the long period of persecution, thousands of men had been sent to the galleys, and a like number of

---

[55] "The Plateau Vivarais-Lignon: 1939-1944: Hospitality, Rescue, and Resistance," exhibit, Le Chambon-sur-Lignon, France, text prepared by Annik Flaud, 5, Center for Holocaust and Genocide Studies, University of Minnesota, http://www.chgs.umn.edu/histories/#surLignon (accessed June 21, 2010).

[56] "The Plateau Vivarais-Lignon: 1939-1944: Hospitality, Rescue, and Resistance," 6.

[57] Benedict, *Christ's Churches*, 377.

[58] González, *The Reformation to the Present Day*, 146-47. See also Benedict, *Christ's Churches*, 377.

women had been condemned to life-imprisonment, while only a handful had uttered the words, 'I reunite.' Two pastors had denied their faith, but countless others had died for their unwillingness to recant. The 'church of the desert' has survived."[59]

A History of Hospitality

Having examined the history of religious life on the Plateau, I will now focus specifically on an important aspect of that religious life: the practice of hospitality. Le Chambon is most famous for becoming a village of refuge for those fleeing the genocidal policies of the Third Reich. However, it is important to recognize that the practice of hospitality had deep roots on the Plateau, roots that can be traced back to the period known as the "desert," discussed previously. The infrastructure that allowed the Chambonnais to welcome refugees was in place, at least to an extent, prior to the arrival of the first Jewish refugees in the village. This section will therefore trace this history of hospitality in an effort to understand the composition of the soil that made Le Chambon a fertile place for rescue and resistance.

The isolated nature of the Plateau initially made it a hospitable place for Protestants avoiding persecution. Many residents of the Plateau converted to Protestantism shortly after the Reformation and other Protestants found shelter in the region. Though they could not always openly practice their religion, the isolated location proved to be somewhat more hospitable for religious minorities than most cities and towns in France. Likewise, Protestant

---

[59] González, *The Reformation to the Present Day*, 147.

pastors often had to go into hiding on the Plateau after the revocation of the Edict of Nantes in 1685.[60]

These Protestants, many of whom had come to the area in an effort to flee persecution, eventually made the Plateau a place of welcome for those facing similar situations. Historian Gerard Bollon, who has studied the Protestant enclaves of the region, traces the area's history of religious and political hospitality back to the late eighteen-hundreds. He specifically points to the promulgation of what was called the "Civil Constitution of the Clergy" in 1790. This document was put forth by the French National Assembly in an effort to reform the Catholic Church, though the Pope was strongly opposed to it.[61] The "Civil Constitution of the Clergy" essentially raised questions about who had authority over the Catholic Church in France. According to the Civil Constitution, Catholic priests were supposed to pledge an oath to "'one King, one faith, one law.'" Those who refused to pledge were suspected of being counterrevolutionaries, deposed from their offices, and faced persecution. Protestant families living in the Haute-Loire region knew what this persecution was like, having experienced it after the revocation of the Edict of Nantes, and therefore provided shelter and protection to priests who refused to take the oath.[62]

---

[60] "The Plateau Vivarais-Lignon: 1939-1944: Hospitality, Rescue, and Resistance," 8.

[61] González, *The Reformation to the Present Day*, 264.

[62] George Bollon, "La Montagne vellave terre d'accueil du XVIIIe au milieu du XXe siècle," *Cahsiers de la Haute-Loire: Revue d'etudes locales* (1991): 214, discussed in Van der Zanden, "The Plateau of Hospitality," 26.

The region also had a history as a health refuge for children. A Protestant pastor named Louis Comte, who ministered in the village in the late 1800s, developed a center dedicated to promoting health and wellness for poor and malnourished children in the surrounding region. This center was called "Children of the Mountain" and functioned up until the 1930s. As the center grew it was replicated in other villages. A number of "children's homes" were built at this time and some of these homes were later used to house Jewish children who came to the village seeking refuge during the World War II.[63]

Another important expression of hospitality on the Plateau occurred during the Spanish Civil War (1936-1939). Trocmé and other community leaders created networks of aid in order to provide assistance to those fleeing Spain for political reasons.[64] For example one home, called "Pouponnière" sheltered approximately 20 Spanish mothers along with their children. A number of other refugees were also welcomed on the Plateau during the Spanish Civil War.[65] Prior to World War II the people of the region also extended hospitality to a number of Socialists, Communists, and members of different left-leaning parties from Austria and Germany who had been persecuted for their political beliefs.[66] This tradition continued throughout World War II. Le Chambon is most well known for the hospitality the

---

[63] Van der Zanden, "The Plateau of Hospitality," 33-35. See also Henry, *We Only Know Men*, 29. These facilities were also used to shelter children during World War I. "As early as 1915, 120 children from the Thann valley are sheltered in the facilities of "The Children on the Mountain," "The Plateau Vivarais-Lignon: 1939-1944: Hospitality, Rescue, and Resistance," 7.

[64] Van der Zanden, "The Plateau of Hospitality," 31.

[65] "The Plateau Vivarais-Lignon: 1939-1944: Hospitality, Rescue, and Resistance," 7.

[66] Van der Zanden, "The Plateau of Hospitality," 32.

villagers provided to Jewish refugees, but the Chambonnais welcomed diverse people to the region, who came for many different reasons. Some were fleeing persecution for their political beliefs and for their religious identity, while others simply sought refuge there because of the hardships and lack of resources their home communities faced during the war.[67]

During the war the connection between education and resistance was also important, and the region had a long history as a place of educational growth. This history was significant in the rescue and resistance work of the 1930s and 1940s, as most of the youth who came to the region for shelter attended the schools there. The *Ecole Nouvelle Cévenole* was opened in 1938 by Trocmé and Theis in order to provide a "Christian and international education for Peace" and the number of students enrolled at the school dramatically increased throughout the war.[68] François Boulet recorded the following numbers of students: 18 in 1938, 40 in 1939, 150 in 1940, 250 in 1941, 300 in 1943, and 350 in 1944.[69] The school also employed Jewish teachers who could not find work elsewhere because of anti-Semitic laws.[70] However, it is important to recognize that the connection between education and resistance dated back several centuries to the period known as the "desert." During this

---

[67] Van der Zanden, "The Plateau of Hospitality," drawing on the work of Serge Bernard, "La construction de la mémoire légendaire au Chambon-sur-Lignon," 45.

[68] "There is no other school like that in the whole of France. Its pedagogical methods – co-education, no grades, self-discipline and an honor system – are totally innovative for that time," "The Plateau Vivarais-Lignon: 1939-1944: Hospitality, Rescue, and Resistance," 20.

[69] François Boulet, "Quelques éléments statistiques," in Bolle et al., *Le Plateau Vivarais-Lignon: Accueil et Résistance 1939-1944* (Le Chambon-sur-Lignon: Société d' Histoire de la Montagne, 1992), 288.

[70] DeSaix and Ruelle, *Hidden on the Mountain*, 21.

period Catholic education was mandated by the government. In the village of Le Chambon, however, many Protestant children attended underground schools dedicated to Protestant principles.[71] The nature of the village as a place of educational development was an important part of the resistance and rescue activities that occurred in the village during the 1930s and 1940s.

Though not directly related to the area's religious history, another important part of the infrastructure that allowed for the reception of refugees during World War II was the region's history as a tourist destination. Although the population of the village was rather small it boasted a number of hotels and *pensions*. These proved to be important way stations in the rescue effort. Refugees would often initially reside in these hotels or *pensions* before being transitioned to more permanent homes. Christine van der Zanden explains, "Many hotel proprietors transitioned easily from accommodating paying guests to housing Jewish and other refugees in need. . . . Some hotels became way stations for refugees who were in the process of finding more secure lodging, or who awaited further information about their clandestine passage to neutral territory."[72]

A historian of the region, Gerard Bollon, draws a connection between the tradition of hospitality on the Plateau and the experience of being a religious minority. Writing about what happened during World War II he explains, "'Therefore, on the Plateau Vivarais-Lignon, social action, an anonymous work of the entire community, organized itself." He

---

[71] Van der Zanden, "The Plateau of Hospitality," 39.

[72] Ibid., 96.

continues, "'It was naturally a consequence of their Faith: the 'so called reformed' has to attend with care to those who were in need, welcome them, protect them.'"[73]

In this chapter I have endeavored to demonstrate that the practice of providing hospitality to those in need had a long history on the Plateau, a history that was important when the first refugees began to arrive in the village as a consequence of the policies of the Third Reich.

Rescue and Resistance on the Plateau during World War II: An Overview

Having traced the history of religious struggle as well as the history of hospitality in the region, I will now endeavor to give a brief overview of the actual events that occurred on the Plateau during the war. It is beyond the scope of this dissertation to describe these events in detail, though a basic synopsis will be provided. Specific details of some events will be described in later chapters and analyzed in light of the theological and ethical convictions they demonstrated.

Invasion and Migration

Germany attacked France on May 10, 1940, along with Belgium, the Netherlands, and Luxembourg. On June 10, 1940 Italy also declared war on France and by June 22, 1940 French forces surrendered. Following the capitulation, millions of people who lived in the north of France headed to the south in an effort to escape the invading German army.[74] On

---

[73] Gerard Bollon, "Montagne vellave terre d'accueil du XVIIIe au milieu du XXe siècle," *Cahiers de la Haute-Loire: Revue d'études locales* (1991): 213, quoted in Van der Zanden, "The Plateau of Hospitality," 28.

[74] Van der Zanden, "The Plateau of Hospitality," 57.

June 22, 1940 an armistice was signed between Hitler and the recently defeated French army.[75] The new location of the French government, led by Marshal Henri Philippe Pétain, was in Vichy, which was part of the southern "unoccupied zone." The relationship between the Vichy government and the German forces could broadly be described as one of "collaboration." Vichy officials cooperated with the German plan to "resettle" Jews, and in October of 1940 the Vichy government ordered the interment of all foreign Jews living in France.[76]

The Call to Help

The conditions of the internment camps were deplorable and André Trocmé felt a call to help the refugees who were arriving in southern France from Central and Eastern Europe. He told his parish council about the need he felt to help and got their permission to visit the American Friends Service Committee in Marseille in order to figure out how to do so. The AFSC was already at work trying to better the inhumane conditions at some of the camps in southern France. Trocmé's initial idea of how to aid refugees involved going into

---

[75] It is the very next day, on Sunday, June 23, 1940 that Trocmé and Theis say from the pulpit, "Tremendous pressure will be put on us to submit passively to a totalitarian ideology. If they do not succeed in subjugating our souls, at least they will want to subjugate our bodies. The duty of Christians is to use the weapons of the Spirit to oppose the violence that they will try to put on our consciences. We appeal to all our brothers in Christ to refuse to cooperate with this violence. . . . Loving, forgiving, and doing good to our adversaries is our duty. Yet we must do this without giving up, and without being cowardly. We shall resist whenever our adversaries demand of us obedience contrary to the orders of the gospel. We shall do so without fear, but also without pride and without hate." From the Magda and André Trocmé Papers, Swarthmore College Library, Peace Collection, quoted in André Trocmé, *Jesus and the Nonviolent Revolution*, ed. Charles E. Moore (Maryknoll, NY: Orbis Books, 2003), xii.

[76] Van der Zanden, "The Plateau of Hospitality," 60.

the internment camps in order to provide assistance. It was only when he met with Burns Chalmers, who coordinated assistance to the internment camps for the AFSC, to talk about how to help that the idea of making Le Chambon a place of refuge emerged. Trocmé gives primary credit for this idea to Chalmers, though Chalmers denies having come up with the idea, explaining that he would not have had the fiscal authority to make decisions like that for his organization.[77] In any case, after his second conversation with Chalmers, Trocmé returned to his parish and proposed the idea to the church leadership, who agreed right away. It was after the church gave its support that Le Chambon became an "official" place of refuge.[78]

Staying on the Plateau anywhere from a few days to a few years, refugees were sheltered in private homes, boarding homes, *pensions*, and even hotels. They arrived from over thirty different countries.[79] The first home for children, *La Guespy*, opened its doors on May 16, 1941. This home was sponsored by several aid organizations, such as *Croix-Rouge Suisse-Secours aux enfants*,[80] *Comité inter-mouvements auprès des évacuées*,[81] International Civil

---

[77] Hallie, *Lest Innocent Blood Be Shed*, 129-36.

[78] Ibid., 167. See also André Trocmé's unpublished "Mémoires" in the André Trocmé and Magda Trocmé Papers, Swarthmore College Peace Collection, Swarthmore, PA, Lesley Maber's *Bundle of the Living* in the Trocmé Papers, and Magda Trocmé, "Le Chambon," in *The Courage to Care*, ed. Carol Rittner and Sondra Myers (New York: New York University Press, 1986), 103.

[79] "The Plateau Vivarais-Lignon: 1939-1944: Hospitality, Rescue, and Resistance," 17.

[80] "The Swiss Aid for Children is a division of the Swiss Red Cross. From 1941 on, it starts to work on the Plateau. . . . Many employees of Swiss Aid were themselves refugees." Ibid., 13-14.

[81] The *Comité inter-mouvements auprès des evacuees*, or CIMADE, was "founded in 1939 when a few Protestant student organizations banded together to help evacuees from Alsace-Lorraine. As early as October 1940, it becomes active in internment camps located near the Spanish border, especially the camp of Gurs." Ibid., 12.

Service,[82] the Quakers, and the Fellowship of Reconciliation and was specifically opened for children who were released from the Gurs internment camp.[83] One child refugee who was released from Gurs, Hanne Hirsch Liebmann, reflects on her journey to Le Chambon:

> A social worker from the OSE (Oeuvre de Secours aux Enfants) came to see my mother and explained that there was a village . . . uh . . . Le Chambon . . . who was looking to help young people, to take them out of the camp and would she agree to let me go. And my mother asked me whether I would want to go, and I said, "Of course." And she never said "but I will miss you. I don't want to go . . . you to go" or anything like that. She let me go. She loved me enough to let me go. Because there were parents who did not. You're looking at me. Yes. There were parents who did not let their children go. As incredible as it sounds, they held on. My mother let me go, and . . . uh . . . together with six other young people, teenagers, we set off beginning of September 1941 to go to Le Chambon. And Le Chambon was, of course, heaven. We were free. We lived in a home, primitive as it was, it still was a house. Uh . . . the food, or course was much better. In fact, in the beginning we couldn't eat all the bread that we got. Not that it was such tremendous amount of bread, but it was more than we could eat. And so we would toast it very, very hard and make little packages and send it back to camp because our constant worry was what was going on in camp. So we would make, all of us, little packages and send them.[84]

Over the course of the war several other children's homes would open, in addition to two trade schools designed to meet the educational needs of the young people residing in Le

---

[82] "The International Civil Service was founded by a pacifist Swiss engineer, Pierre Cérésole. Its motto is: 'No words, deeds.' Pierre Cérésole wants to promote a useful service towards peace. The French division has to close down at the very beginning of the war but some members remain active in underground work. On the Plateau, the International Civil Service take an active part in setting up and running the Guespy and the "Farm School" (la Ferme Ecole)." "The Plateau Vivarais-Lignon: 1939-1944: Hospitality, Rescue, and Resistance," 13.

[83] Van der Zanden, "The Plateau of Hospitality," 100, drawing on the work of François Boulet, *Les Montagnes Françaises 1940-1944: Des montagnes-refuges aux montagnes maquis* (Villeneuve-d'Ascq: Presses Universitaires du Septentrion, 1997), 279.

[84] Hanne Hirsch Liebmann, transcript of interview, Le Chambon-sur-Lignon – Personal History, United States Holocaust Memorial Museum, http://www.ushmm.org/wlc/en/medi_oi.php?ModuleID=10007518&MediaId=2527 (accessed October 20, 1010).

Chambon and the surrounding area.[85] One of these schools, the Farm School, also produced food that helped alleviate shortages on the Plateau.[86]

Passage to the Plateau

Refugees arrived on the Plateau through both formal and informal networks.[87] For example several French, Jewish, and international organizations were active in trying to better the living conditions in the camps. These organizations were sometimes also able to obtain the release of prisoners, particularly children and youth, and help them find their way to places like Le Chambon. Parents in prison camps had to make difficult decisions about whether to separate the family and send their children into hiding or to keep the family together and face the risks associated with life in an internment camp. Aid organizations were generally not able to obtain the release of adults from the camps, though this did happen on occasion and Le Chambon had one house specifically set aside for adults who had been released from the camps.[88] Essentially these organizations functioned as conductors on one of the routes on the underground railroad to Le Chambon.

Others came to the Plateau through informal networks – they heard by word of mouth that Le Chambon was a place they could go to in order to escape immanent

---

[85] Van der Zanden, "The Plateau of Hospitality," 102. Many of these homes took in malnourished children from the surrounding areas in addition to political and religious refugees. See Maber, *Bundle of the Living*.

[86] "The Plateau Vivarais-Lignon: 1939-1944: Hospitality, Rescue, and Resistance," 14.

[87] See Maber, *Bundle of the Living*..

[88] Van der Zanden, "The Plateau of Hospitality," 72.

persecution. Other refugees came to the Plateau because they had been there before on vacation with their families. Some came in response to job advertisements, particularly advertisements for teaching positions.[89] Likewise, the Plateau continued to be a place of refuge after the war, as aid organizations placed orphaned Jewish children there until they could find permanent accommodations for them.[90] Madeleine Dreyfus, a social worker who worked for the *Organisation de Secours Aux Enfants*[91] and was eventually arrested for her involvement in the rescue activities, provides an account of the passage to Le Chambon. She explains:

> Several times a month I used to take the train from Lyon with a dozen or so children. Sometimes they had been given to us by their parents, sometimes they had escaped the hands of the Nazis at the moment of their parents' arrest. We went to Saint-Etienne and took the local train from Tence, which climbed as far as Chambon. Generally Eva Déléage was waiting for us at the station. We would leave the children at the Hôtel May, near the train station, then Eva and I would begin to make the rounds to places which we thought might "take" a child.
>
> When enough places had been found, I went back to the Hôtel May and took the children round to their new homes. These brave families knew how to defend the children from the Vichy police who were searching for them.[92]

---

[89] Van der Zanden, "The Plateau of Hospitality," 49-50.

[90] Ibid., 50.

[91] The *Organisation de Secour aux Enfants*, or O.S.E., "a French division of a Jewish Russian Society, was founded in 1933. It was especially concerned with the care of Jewish children persecuted by Hitler, at first, foreign children and then, the French children too. As a Charity, the O.S.E. is first allowed to work openly. But very soon it has to go underground and it becomes the "Réseau Garel" (Garel Network), in charge of locating safe hiding places for children. On the Plateau, Madeleine Dreyfus is in charge of finding families able to shelter the children, of escorting them during their trip by train and of checking on their needs," "The Plateau Vivarais-Lignon: 1939-1944: Hospitality, Rescue, and Resistance," 12-13.

[92] Madeleine Dreyfus, "L'OSE," in *Le Plateau Vivarais-Lignon: Accueil et Résistance 1939-1944*, ed. Pierre Bolle (Le Chambon-sur-Lignon: Société d'Histoire de la Montagne, 1992), 217-18. As translated in Van der Zanden, "The Plateau of Hospitality," 74. See also Maber, *Bundle of the Living*.

A Community of Rescuers

When one hears about the story of Le Chambon, André Trocmé rightfully plays a central role. Yet, it is important to recognize that hundreds, if not thousands, of other characters were also a part of this story. For example, Trocmé's wife, Magda, provided key leadership in the effort, as well as the assistant pastor, Eduoard Theis. There were a number of figures involved in running the children's homes, one of whom, Daniel Trocmé, was eventually murdered in a concentration camp because of his involvement. Teachers at the local school enrolled students who obviously had false papers. Shop keepers forgot to ask for ration cards. Government employees disseminated extra food tickets to families sheltering refugees.[93] While the list of characters is too long to name, it is important to recognize that André Trocmé certainly did not act alone. Almost everyone in the community was involved in one way or another.

Further, it was not just individuals, but also a number of charitable organizations that were involved in the efforts. For example, the Quakers, the Congregationalists, the *Comité inter-mouvements auprès des évacuées*, the International Civil Service, the Salvation Army, the Fellowship of Reconciliation, and even the governments of Sweden and Switzerland helped fund group homes for children in Le Chambon.[94] In total there were seven children's homes funded by such organizations.

---

[93] Patrick Henry, *We Only Know Men*, 23-24.

[94] Hallie, *Lest Innocent Blood Be Shed*, 176.

Likewise, it was not just the village of Le Chambon, but also surrounding villages that were involved in rescue and resistance work. For example, the twelve Reformed parishes in the area were a part of a group called *Consistoire de la Montagne de l'Eglise Réformée* (Consistory of the Reformed Church of the Mountain). The clergy of these parishes and their spouses met once per month to discuss the ministries of their various churches. After 1942, figuring out how to help refuges on the Plateau was at the top of their agenda.[95] One of these pastors, Daniel Curet, wrote of this period, ""Thus from January 1943 on, I must stress the devotion and the sense of hospitality of the Protestants of the parish: it was thanks to these two qualities, to which we must add remarkable discretion, that we could organize shelter of the persecuted on a vast scale.""[96] Through a letter Curet wrote to his parents one also gets a sense of the involvement of other churches and clergy in the work of resistance and rescue. The letter is written in code, of sorts, in that the pastor refers to Jewish refugees as books of the Old Testament, just in case the letter was to fall into the wrong hands. He writes:

> 'Today I had to hurry a bit to place all the eternal books on the Old Testament. Tomorrow I shall be able to take five of them to homes, and I am utterly proud that my parishioners have shown themselves to be so interested in this genre of literature. This edition has come from a Marseille printing-press. They are printing large editions, it seems, and without a doubt my good booksellers of Le Chambon will expect me to place a certain number here. And then there is other literature to be disposed of: there remains a stock of Protestant books in German, even some in Dutch, it seems. I don't know how they got sent here . . . I'm writing to you in the

---

[95] Daniel Curtet, "Témoignage d'un ancient Pasteur," in *Le Plateau Vivarais*-Lignon, ed. Pierre Bolle, 55.

[96] Ibid., 55, translated in Van der Zanden, "The Plateau of Hospitality," 112-113.

> kitchen of Madame Abel, my hostess, with a book from Le Chambon (!) on a chair next to me."[97]

Pastor Curtet was also involved in arranging illegal food ration cards for the refugees.[98] Another pastor, André Bettex, who ministered in the village of Le Mazet, had a Boy Scout troupe that would help him find homes for refugees. When it eventually became too dangerous for some of the refugees to stay in the village Bettex gave them Boy Scout uniforms and guided them all the way to Switzerland. They sang a Swiss song as they travelled so the police would not suspect they were Jewish.[99] Charles Delizy, another pastor in the region had possession of an illegal radio transmitter and used it to pass along coded messages to the Resistance. Daniel Besson, who pastored in the very small village of Montbuzat, was also directly involved in finding homes for refugees among his parishioners.[100] Likewise, prior to coming to the Plateau Vivarais-Lignon Pastor André Morel worked for CIMADE (*Comité Inter-Mouvements Auprès Des Evacués*) and guided refugees to Switzerland in this capacity. He was eventually caught and imprisoned for doing so, though after his release he was sent to Le Chambon where he continued to be active in resistance efforts.[101]

---

[97] Curtet, "Témoignage d'un ancient Pasteur," 58-59, translated in Van der Zanden, "The Plateau of Hospitality," 114. In another letter to his parents, dated January 5, 1943, Curtet writes, "These books are quite popular in my parish, especially with the Plymouth Brethren. (Everything concerning the Old Testament interests them; they say straight away, 'They are the People of God!')" Quoted in Lesley Maber, *Bundle of the Living*, André Trocmé and Magda Trocmé Papers, Swarthmore College Peace Collection, Swarthmore, PA.

[98] DeSaix and Ruelle, *Hidden on the Mountain*, 40.

[99] Ibid.

[100] Ibid., 40-41.

Along with the other Protestants in the region it is also important to recognize that Catholics on the Plateau were involved in rescue work, though to a slightly lesser degree than their Protestant counterparts. Drawing on the work of historian Henri Dubois, Christine van der Zanden explains that Catholics also participated in rescue efforts but

> Catholic priests on the Plateau did not use the Church's infrastructure to organize rescue and resistance in the same way that Protestant clergy in the region did. Catholic priests did not collectively coordinate the reception of Jewish refugees to their parishioners' homes. Protestant clergy made arrangements with sympathetic families, while Catholics received and opened their doors when asked. Their rescue was highly secret and individualized, unlike the efforts organized by the Protestant clergy on the Plateau.[102]

Magda Trocmé also recollects how Catholics helped in the rescue efforts. She explains, "Oh, there were various monasteries and convents and Catholic homes where refugees were as safe as they were in Le Chambon, and we sent people there without hesitation. We never thought, 'Those places are Protestant,' or 'Those places are Catholic.' No. We thought only, 'Those are people who will help.'"[103] In this sense, the rescue work was ecumenical, though the Protestants of the region took more of an active role in initiating and organizing it.

---

[101] DeSaix and Ruelle, *Hidden on the Mountain*, 42. In her unpublished book *Bundle of the Living* Lesley Maber also mentions several other pastors involved in the rescue activities. She explains that a pastor in Tence (eight kilometers from Le Chambon) named Roland Leenhardt sheltered refugees in his home and arranged for others to stay with members of the Plymouth Brethren (Darbyites). The pastor of Le Mazet, which was four kilometers from Le Chambon, was named Jeannet, and he also helped organize shelter for refugees.

[102] Henri Dubois, "Les communautés catholiques du Plateau, "*Le Plateau Vivarais-Lignon*, ed. Pierre Bolle, 83-85, discussed in Van der Zanden, "The Plateau of Hospitality," 116-117.

[103] Quoted in Hallie, *Lest Innocent Blood Be Shed*, 188. Lesley Maber also explains, "On the Plateau refugees could knock on the door of a Catholic farm with confidence." *Bundle of the Living*.

Likewise, it is important to recognize that the Jewish refugees were active in the effort as well.[104] They were not simply passive recipients, but came to the Plateau on their own initiative, and once there, many aided in the rescue efforts. Some became teachers in the local schools and others took on positions of leadership in the various children's homes. Almost all actively participated in the daily life of their host families- helping out around the house and/or on the farm. Some became involved in creating false papers for new arrivals, and others joined the *maquis*.[105] The Jewish children of the village generally attend school and were active in various youth activities, such as scouts and sports.[106] Jewish organizations, such as *Oeuvre de secours aux enfants* (Children's Rescue Network, OSE), also made significant contributions to the rescue and resistance work on the Plateau.

The Increasing Threat

In 1942 life became more precarious for the refugees living in the village, as well as for their hosts. In the summer of 1942 mass deportations of Jews to Nazi death camps began. The Nazis were disappointed when the trains were not completely filled, and Pétain and the Vichy government agreed to hand over both foreign and French Jews. One French official, Pierre Laval suggested that it was best not to separate families, so children began to be sent to the death camps as well, even though the Germans had not yet asked for them. In November of 1942 German forces occupied what had been the "free" southern zone.

---

[104] See Van der Zanden, "The Plateau of Hospitality," 12.

[105] The *maquis* was an armed resistance group that was active in the surrounding area.

[106] "The Plateau Vivarais-Lignon: 1939-1944: Hospitality, Rescue, and Resistance," 19.

Round-ups of Jews increased and many Jews who had been living in internment camps were handed over to the Germans. The occupation of the southern zone also triggered an increased influx of refugees to the Plateau. Christine van der Zanden explains, "During the summer of 1942, and again in November of that year, the climate on the Plateau changed, especially for Jewish refugees and the people who hid them. The Plateau saw refugees flood into the region, including Jews and *réfractaires* of the STO. Official government presence was also stepped up, as the German occupation forces imposed higher quotas of 'deportable' Jews."[107] There was an increased German presence in the region, and George Lamirand, the Vichy Secretary for Youth, even came to visit the Plateau in August of 1942.[108] In addition to refugees, German soldiers who had been wounded in battle came to Le Chambon to recuperate, filling the Hôtel Lignon.[109]

With the occupation of the southern zone daily life also became much more dangerous for those who were sheltering Jews. For example, the hotel filled with German soldiers was located right next to a *pension* that housed Jewish children.[110] It was after the occupation of the southern zone that Pastors André Trocmé and Édouard Theis were arrested (February 13, 1943), along with Roger Darcissac, who was the director of the public

---

[107] Van der Zanden, "The Plateau of Hospitality,"130. STO stands for *Service du travail obligatoire.*

[108] Even though Trocmé is under increased surveillance, it is in August of 1942 that he preaches a sermon on Deuteronomy 19. The topic of the sermon is the necessity of providing shelter for the persecuted "so that innocent blood will not be shed," *Jesus and the Nonviolent Revolution*, xiii.

[109] DeSaix and Ruelle, *Hidden on the Mountain*, 22.

[110] Ibid., 22.

school in the village and also an elder in the church.[111] They were interned at a camp in Saint-Paul d'Eyjeaux for approximately one month, eventually being offered release on the condition that they sign an oath of loyalty to the French government. Though they certainly wanted to return home to their families and to their other important responsibilities on the Plateau, the pastors refused to sign the oath.[112] Despite their refusal they were released one day later. Yet, not long after their return home Trocmé and Theis were forced to go into hiding for ten months. Around this same time Lesley Maber and Miss Williamson, who were also involved in the rescue effort, were arrested on the charge of being spies for a foreign government. In June of 1943 there was a round-up at a group home in Le Chambon called *Maison des Roches* and nineteen people, including Daniel Trocmé, the cousin of André Trocmé and the director of the home, were arrested and deported. Many eventually faced death in Nazi concentration camps. This increased threat led some Jews to leave the area, while it drove others into "deeper" hiding on the Plateau. Some moved from group homes in the village to farms where they were able to find better places to conceal themselves if necessary. Christine van der Zanden summarizes the situation:

---

[111] See Édouard Théis's article about "André Trocmé" in *Reconciliation* (1976): 28, André Trocmé and Magda Trocmé Papers, Swarthmore College Peace Collection, Swarthmore, PA. They were likely set free due to the intervention of Pastor Marc Boegner.

[112] The declaration they refused to sign read: "I the undersigned, _____, having been released from the observation camp of Saint-Paul d'Eyjeaux, Haute-Vienne, attest that the camp chief has informed me of my obligation to give my word of honor that I join the New Social Order and will show due deference to the March of France, the Head of State, the man and his work, and to restrain myself from any anti-national activities, and in case I should disobey, charges will be brought against me, and new administrative measures can be taken against me." André Trocmé and Magda Trocmé Papers. Swarthmore College Peace Collection, Swarthmore, PA.

> Jews in hiding and hidden on the Plateau faced a whole series of unprecedented, intense challenges in addition to those they had endured prior to the increased threat of arrest: separation from family and loved ones, obtaining food, clothing, and supplies, and hiding their Jewish identity. They now faced physical isolation and complete dependency upon a host family or benefactor, someone who was willing to lie to authorities to conceal their presence. One had to remain unseen and unheard, and had to exist where it was nearly impossible and illegal to exist. Often this meant living in normally inhabitable quarters, depending on the hosts to provide food, water, clothing, and every other basic need, and total isolation from peers and other people, except one's benefactor. The emotional toll was enormous.[113]

Despite the increased risk and potentially fatal consequences for both guests and hosts, the rescue effort persisted and the people of the Plateau continued to provide hospitality to the refugees who came to their doors.

In the following chapters I will explore some of the details of these activities and engage in theological and ethical analysis of the events that occurred on the Plateau Vivarais-Lignon. Before doing so, however, I will more closely examine the life, ministry, and thought of André Trocmé, the village pastor who planted the seeds of rescue and resistance in the fertile soil of the Plateau Vivarais-Lignon.

---

[113] Van der Zanden, "The Plateau of Hospitality," 164.

CHAPTER THREE

THE LIFE AND THEOLOGY OF ANDRÉ TROCMÉ

> Happy are those hungry and thirsty for justice: for they will be satisfied.
> -Inscription in André Trocmé's Bible[114]

Thousands of villagers and farmers, almost a dozen pastors, the Jewish refugees themselves, as well as national and international aid organizations all played significant roles in the rescue efforts that occurred on the Plateau between 1939 and 1945. No comparable wide-scale, civilian effort to aid Jewish refugees has been documented. While this endeavor involved thousands of people, one man stands out not only for initiating this effort but also for providing the spiritual leadership necessary for such a phenomenon to take place. That man is André Pascal Trocmé. The people of the Plateau would very likely not have undertaken such an endeavor without Trocmé's leadership. Yet, Trocmé could not have organized the rescue effort that he did without the people of the Plateau. The religious history of the region made the soil in Le Chambon fertile for rescue and resistance, but Trocmé was the one who planted the seeds.

Because of the incredibly significant role that André Trocmé played in the events that occurred on the Plateau during World War II this chapter will focus on his life, ministry, and theology. After tracing the formative events of Trocmé's childhood and giving an overview of his pastoral ministry, I will attempt to articulate Trocmé's basic convictions about Christ, the kingdom of God, and ethics. Other aspects of Trocmé's theology, such as

---

[114] A picture of André Trocmé's Bible is available on the website of the United States Holocaust Memorial Museum. "Artifact: Bible from Le Chambon pastor who saved Jews," *Holocaust Encyclopedia*, United States Holocaust Memorial Museum, http://www.ushmm.org/wlc/en/media_da.php?MediaId=100 (accessed October 20, 2010).

his views on nonviolence and the church, will be covered in subsequent chapters of this dissertation.

André Pascal Trocmé was born on Easter Sunday, 1901, in the French city of Saint-Quentin. His father, a businessman by the name of Paul Eugène Trocmé, was a descendent of French Huguenots. His mother, Paula Schwerdtmann, was originally from Germany and shared her husband's Protestant faith. From the moment of André's birth his parents hoped their son would one day become a pastor.[115]

André's father was a fairly wealthy businessman, and André's early childhood was one of financial privilege. The family lived in a twelve bedroom home with a garden and instead of attending school André was educated by private tutors. He had minimal contact with the people who lived in Saint-Quentin and recalls having the feeling of being set apart from others because he was one of "*le people Trocmé.*"[116] André, however, preferred the warmth of his mother's German relatives to his father's family and to what he perceived as the cold nature of his upper class life in Saint-Quentin.[117]

Despite his privileged upbringing, André's life was marked by tragedy at a young age. His mother died when he was ten as the result of a car accident. The crash occurred when Trocmé's father tried to pass another car, despite his mother's protests about his father's

---

[115]Alison Stark Draper, *Pastor André Trocmé: Spiritual Leader of the French Village of Le Chambon* (New York: Rosen Publishing Group, 2001), 12-13. See also Philip P. Hallie, *Lest Innocent Blood Be Shed: The Story of the Village of Le Chambon and How Goodness Happened There* (New York: Harper & Row, 1979), 48-49 and Édouard Théis's article about "André Trocmé" in *Reconciliation* (1976), André Trocmé and Magda Trocmé Papers, Swarthmore College Peace Collection, Swarthmore, PA.

[116] Hallie, *Lest Innocent Blood Be Shed*, 49-50.

[117] Draper, *Pastor André Trocmé*, 13. Hallie, *Lest Innocent Blood Be Shed*, 48-49.

speed. André was also a passenger in the car, though he was not seriously injured in the accident. This unnecessary tragedy profoundly affected the young André; his grief over the loss of his mother was almost unbearable and he wrestled with feelings of resentment toward his father. Some biographers believe that this event also made André recognize the sacredness of life: an ethic that would later inspire him in his rescue and resistance efforts.[118] Others point out how this event made Trocmé profoundly aware of the importance of forgiveness. Though he held his father morally responsible for his mother's death, he also knew that he needed to forgive him.[119]

Though the loss of his mother was undoubtedly the most difficult event of his childhood, life became even harder for the Trocmé family with the outbreak of World War I. The city of Saint-Quentin was invaded by the Germans, and German troops even occupied the Trocmé home for a period of time. The municipality was surrounded by barbed wire and residents were no longer able to come and go as they pleased. Food was in short supply and life was generally quite difficult.[120]

It was during this period that André became involved with a Protestant youth organization called the Union of Saint-Quentin, a group that was very significant to his spiritual and moral development. The group gathered on a regular basis to read the Bible, worship, and pray together. Trocmé found a real sense of community in the Union and it

---

[118] Draper, *Pastor André Trocmé*, 14. See also Édouard Théis, "André Trocmé," 25.

[119] Hallie, *Lest Innocent Blood Be Shed*, 53.

[120] Draper, *Pastor André Trocmé*, 15.

was in this setting that he preached his first sermons.[121] The group also engaged in social outreach together, specifically trying to better the deplorable living conditions of Russian prisoners of war. Even though it was illegal to help the prisoners, members of the Union brought vegetables to them every day. On occasion one of them would be caught and would have to spend eight days in prison, but the group persisted in their work despite such consequences.

The living conditions in Saint-Quentin continued to deteriorate throughout World War I; in 1917 the Trocmés gained direct awareness of what it was like to be refugees. André's family left Saint-Quentin in February, 1917 for what they hoped would be the greener pastures of Belgium. However, this proved to be a very difficult period for the Trocmés and André learned first-hand what it meant to be truly hungry and to beg for one's food.[122]

The teenage André also had a difficult time grappling with the nature of the war itself. His mother was originally from Germany and many of his relatives still lived there, yet his brother was fighting in the French military and risking his life in battle against the Germans. Part of André was tempted to hate the German occupiers, but in the face of this temptation he remembered his love for his German relatives and felt a keen sense of empathy for the wounded Germans returning from the front.

It was when he lived in Saint-Quentin that Trocmé also became personally acquainted with a German soldier who greatly impacted his beliefs about nonviolence. The

---

[121] Hallie, *Lest Innocent Blood Be Shed*, 56.

[122] Ibid., 54.

German military occupied part of the Trocmé home and it was on his own staircase that André met a soldier named Kindler. Kindler explained to André that he had become a Christian and that his Christian faith did not allow him to kill others. He was a telegrapher and telegraphers usually carried a gun or a bayonet, but Kindler did not. This was the first time André met a conscientious objector and Kindler's convictions deeply impressed him. His later theological studies would reinforce Trocmé's nascent sense that nonviolence was an essential aspect of Christian discipleship.

Kindler's convictions resonated with him to such a degree that when Trocmé did his service in the French military in 1921 he also decided not to take his weapon with him when his unit went out on a mission to map part of Morocco. The lieutenant in charge eventually discovered that Trocmé was without his weapon and reprimanded him for putting the entire unit in danger. Trocmé explained that as a theology student he had made a promise to God never to kill.[123] Through this experience Trocmé also realized the importance of being forthcoming about one's convictions and standing firm in them at the outset.

After the war the Trocmé family moved to Paris, where André began his theological studies. It was as a student at the University of Paris that Trocmé met Édouard Theis, who was also a pacifist and whom Trocmé would later invite to become the assistant pastor of the church in Le Chambon and the founding director of the *Ecole Nouvelle Cévenole*. As a student in Paris, Trocmé also joined the Fellowship of Reconciliation, an organization with

---

[123] Pierre Boismorand, *Magda et André Trocmé, figures de resistance* (Paris: Le cerf, 2008), 51-52. See also Édouard Théis, "André Trocmé," 26.

which he would be involved the rest of his life. While in Paris he also became involved with the union movement and anti-poverty work.

Trocmé was eventually awarded a scholarship to study at Union Theological Seminary in New York. He was interested in the Social Gospel and travelled to New York in order to study what he saw as a practical manifestation of the gospel. Trocmé agreed with many tenets of the Social Gospel, as he ardently believed in the connection between faith and action. However, after arriving in New York he became somewhat disillusioned with the movement, perceiving it as too secular and too rational. His faith was deeply personal and he believed that a profoundly personal faith was necessary to bring about the changes in which the proponents of the Social Gospel believed.[124]

As is true of any student, Trocmé needed money, so he took a job as a French tutor for the sons of John D. Rockefeller, Jr. While he appreciated the income, and the ability to practice his English, he was somewhat critical of Rockefeller's worldview.[125]

While in New York, Trocmé formed another relationship that proved to be much more significant than his relationship with Rockefeller. It was in New York that he met his future wife, Magda Gill. Born in Italy, Magda was in New York studying to be a social worker. One of the first things that impressed André about her was her compassion for others, a virtue she would put into practice throughout their ministry. Magda had been raised Catholic (and as a young girl had even lived in a convent for a period of time), though she

---

[124] Hallie, *Lest Innocent Blood Be Shed*, 62-65.

[125] Ibid., 63-64.

was now fairly critical of the various branches of Christianity for moving away from what she believed to be the heart of the faith - loving and caring for others. Despite their differences of belief, Trocmé proposed in 1926, explaining along with his proposal, "'I shall be a Protestant pastor, and I want to live a life of poverty. I am a conscientious objector, and that could mean prison as well as all sorts of difficulties.'"[126] Trocmé would eventually go to prison as a consequence of his beliefs, but fortunately Magda was willing to live the same kind of radical life and accepted his proposal.

The couple returned to Europe, married, and took their first parish in the poor industrial city of Maubeuge. Moving after a year to Sin-le-Noble, near the border of Belgium, the Trocmés stayed there for six years, ministering primarily to poor miners. It was as a pastor in Sin-le-Noble that Trocmé began to ask, "'If Jesus really walked upon this earth, why do we keep treating him as if he were a disembodied, impossibly idealistic ethical theory? If he was a real man, then the Sermon on the Mount was made for people on this earth; and if he existed God has shown us in flesh and blood what goodness is for flesh-and-blood people.'"[127]

In 1934 the Trocmés moved to Le Chambon and André began to pastor the French Reformed Church in the village. Their initial impression of the town was somewhat negative, but with time André came to appreciate the religious history and deep convictions of many of the villagers. He wrote to a friend in America, "'The old Huguenot spirit is still alive. The humblest peasant home has its Bible and the father reads it every day. These people who do

---

[126] Hallie, *Lest Innocent Blood Be Shed*, 65-66.

[127] Quoted in Hallie, *Lest Innocent Blood Be Shed*, 68.

not read the papers but the Scriptures, do not stand on the moving soil of opinion but on the rock of the Word of God.'"[128]

The key aspects of the Trocmés' leadership role in making Le Chambon a place of refuge will be covered throughout this dissertation. It is important, however, to recognize now that André and Magda Trocmé led by example, opening their doors to those in need. In a letter written to his brother (though addressed to someone else for the sake of security), André describes the situation in the family home. He writes:

> You know, perhaps, that this past summer we were able to help out about sixty Jewish people who had taken refuge in our home: we hid them, provided them with fresh supplies, rescued them from deportation groups and often led them to a safe country . . . By the tens, by the hundreds, Jews are being directed toward Le Chambon. My usual ministry has ceased completely because of this situation. Normally, in the summer, my dining room has been transformed into a waiting room (10-15 people a day). Now that's the situation all year round.[129]

It is also important to recognize that even after the war he and Magda continued to be involved in movements that endeavored to bring about peace and reconciliation. For example, in 1950 they moved to Versailles, France and shortly thereafter founded a center called *Maison de la Reconciliation*. The *Maison de la Reconciliation* was dedicated to international peace and bringing together groups of various nationalities in order to foster dialogue and reconciliation. Trocmé also became increasingly involved with the Fellowship of Reconciliation after the war, lecturing for them on a frequent basis and serving as the

---

[128] Quoted in Draper, *Pastor André Trocmé*, 24.

[129] Magda Trocmé, "Souvenirs Autobiographiques," 247, quoted in Patrick Gerard Henry, *We Only Know Men: The Rescue of Jews in France during the Holocaust* (Washington D.C.:The Catholic University of America Press, 2007), 22. Though this letter appears in Magda's memoirs, it was originally written by André.

European Secretary for the Fellowship of Reconciliation from 1948-1960.[130] It was as a representative of the Fellowship of Reconciliation that Trocmé travelled to the United States and delivered the Robert Pain Lectures, which would form the basis of a book he published in 1953 called *The Politics of Repentance*.

In 1956 André and Magda decided to take the next step in their commitment to peace and moved to Algeria, where they studied conflict in the area and worked against illiteracy. André also partnered with the Mennonites to help found *EIRENE* (International Service for Peace), an organization that helped conscientious objectors as well as other volunteers find places they could be of service and work for peace in developing countries. Trocmé also became very involved in the movement against atomic weapons and was elected president of the French Federation against Atomic Armaments in 1959. He put his theology of peace on paper in 1961, with the publication of the French version of *Jesus and the Nonviolent Revolution*. Trocmé's leadership in the village of Le Chambon as well as his ongoing efforts for reconciliation and justice made him a candidate for the Noble Peace Prize in 1950 and 1955. Though he provided leadership to various international peace organizations, Trocmé never lost his sense of calling to the pastorate, and in 1960 accepted a call to pastor in Geneva, where he served for the last decade of his life.[131] He died in June, 1971, just a few weeks before he was scheduled to receive the Medal of Justice from the government of Israel. The designation of "Righteous Among the Nations" was eventually

---

[130] Charles E. Moore, introduction to the revised and expanded edition *of Jesus and the Nonviolent* Revolution, rev. ed. (Maryknoll, NY: Orbis Books, 2003), xiv.

[131] Though Trocmé was a candidate for the Noble Peace Prize on two occasions, even toward the end of his career he had trouble finding a position as a pastor because of his commitment to pacifism.

given by Yad Vashem to all the people of Le Chambon and the surrounding area for their courageous behavior in harboring Jewish refugees. Though Yad Vashem has recognized many individuals as "Righteous Gentiles," Le Chambon is the only community that has received this award.

Jesus, the Kingdom of God, and Ethics

The motivating factor behind André Trocmé's commitment to making Le Chambon a place of refuge was his faith. Trocmé believed that Jesus inaugurated the kingdom of God based on the vision of Jubilee found in the Hebrew Bible. The Jubilee principles instituted in the Hebrew Bible and taught by Christ have radical spiritual, economic, and political implications and are the basis for Trocmé's ethics. In the following section I will explore Trocmé's beliefs about Christ, the kingdom of God, and ethics, as these convictions provided the impetus for his actions.

Christology

André Trocmé's theological and ethical convictions are Christocentric and as such are focused on the kingdom of God. Trocmé held a deep belief that Christ was the answer to the evil perpetrated by the Third Reich, and his convictions about Christ were what led him to make Le Chambon a place of refuge for those hunted by Hitler's regime. In the Introduction to a compilation of his children's sermons he writes, "May the reader remember that several of these stories were written during the occupation of France by

Hitler, and that the gospel of the birth, the death, and the resurrection of Christ was the only valid answer to the diabolical horrors perpetrated by the princes of this world."[132]

For Trocmé, Christ is a revolutionary figure, whose goal is to bring about the kingdom of God. The principles of Jubilee are the battle cry of Christ's revolution, the spirit of the revolution is one of compassion, and the means of Christ's revolution are nonviolent.[133] At the inauguration of Jesus' ministry in the gospel of Luke (4:16-21) Jesus reads from the scroll of Isaiah and says "today this scripture has been fulfilled in your hearing" (NRSV). Trocmé draws the connection between this passage and the practice of Jubilee in the Hebrew Bible, arguing that the proclamation of Jubilee was central to Jesus' mission and ministry.[134] Jesus' message of Jubilee was revolutionary in that it challenged systems of injustice and oppression. It was good news for the poor, but bad news for those who oppressed the poor; because it threatened the interests of those with wealth and power they often responded with anger toward Jesus.[135] Jesus' message of Jubilee brought freedom for the captives, but also freedom for the oppressors, and was ultimately about living life as God intended.[136]

---

[132] André Trocmé, *Angels and Donkeys: Tales for Christmas and Other Times*, trans. Nelly Trocmé Hewett (Intercourse, PA: Good Books, 1998), 3.

[133] Trocmé, *Jesus and the Nonviolent Revolution*, 137.

[134] Ibid., 20. With Trocmé's permission John Howard Yoder freely adapts a chapter on Jesus and Jubilee from Trocmé's *Jesus and the Nonviolent Revolution* into his *The Politics of Jesus*.

[135] Ibid., 16.

[136] Trocmé explains, "By liberating others from their debts, you set yourselves free from the fetters that bind, which keep you from being ready for the coming kingdom of God's justice." Ibid., 35.

Jesus' life, teachings, and death were therefore political in their very nature. He did not provide a comprehensive vision for politics in the traditional sense, but his ministry nonetheless had profoundly political consequences.[137] Though he was not necessarily anti-establishment, Jesus' message was certainly revolutionary.[138] His politics were that of the kingdom of God. Trocmé explains, "Jesus came to bring a revolution, one that would impact every sphere of existence, including social and power relations. His message of repentance called for an about-face on the part of both individuals and entire cities. He did not want to reform political structures but wanted everything to come under God's rulership."[139]

One aspect of Trocmé's christology that had social and political consequences was his belief in the sacred value of each person. He believed that the incarnation infused life with meaning, and demonstrated that God cares profoundly for human life. It testifies to the depth of God's compassion and concern for every human and for the world in general. Trocmé explains, "Because of the birth, life, death, and resurrection of Jesus Christ, we know that every birth, every life, and every death matters to God."[140] In this sense, the

---

[137] Trocmé, *Jesus and the Nonviolent Revolution*, 42-43. Trocmé explains that an apolitical reading of the gospel "amounts to good news only for the rich – quite a different message from that of the One who went about proclaiming good news for the poor."

[138] Ibid., 138.

[139] Ibid., 57.

[140] Ibid., xix. He also explains, "Jesus showed that in God's eyes each person is unique and comes before anything else. To restore our sacredness, the sacrosanct tradition will be violated, the Messiah will be condemned to death, and he will rise again. The kingdom of God will take a different form, for the future will center on the newborn child of history: the person." Ibid., 148. On page 145 of *Jesus and the Nonviolent Revolution* he similarly writes, "Jesus remained focused on the plight of individual human beings, and by so doing gave his

incarnation instills a sense of sacredness in all human life. This sense of sacredness was important to how the Chambonnais treated Jewish refugees, and it was also important to Trocmé's insistence that they not hate the Germans.

This sense of sacredness means that individuals matter to God, and so, too, do human societies and history. Trocmé declares, "If each person has thus been invested with such value, how great is the worth of the sum of human history!"[141] And for Trocmé, human history hinges on Christ. He writes, "Whether one believes he is the Son of God or not, Jesus *is* the central event of history, because *de facto* his coming changed humankind."[142] Christ thus instills in humanity a sense of sacred worth and changes the course of human history.

The salvation Christ offers therefore affects individuals as well as society. For Trocmé salvation was personal and social, spiritual and physical.[143] He believed that Christ came to save the "entire person" and that meant addressing a person's spiritual and physical needs. He explains, "To save someone is to restore that person physically, socially, and

---

kingdom an importance like no other political movement before or since." Trocmé also addresses this theme in Chapter Thirteen of *Jesus and the Nonviolent Revolution* as he writes, "In the synagogue, Jesus looked at the beggar with his hand and saw him with the eyes of a God who would only possess one man in the world. God's love centers totally on each person as if he or she were the only one" (147).

[141] Trocmé, *Jesus and the Nonviolent Revolution*, xix.

[142] Ibid. Trocmé also addresses this in *The Politics of Repentance* as he writes, "The Cross of Jesus marks a *final* event in the middle of history. By it, Jesus reduces all things to unity. After it, there is nothing but God triumphing over evil" (46).

[143] Moore, introduction to *Jesus and the Nonviolent Revolution*, xiii.

spiritually. . . . Jesus made no distinction between body and soul. To save is to heal at once the entire human being, body and soul."[144]

The cross is central to Trocmé's understanding of salvation, and Christ's death on the cross has both personal and social consequences. Redemption is holistic, in that it involves physical, social and spiritual realities. This sense of holistic redemption is illustrated in one of Trocmé's children's sermons titled "The Slave Set Free."[145] In this story the twelve year old Christ pays the ransom for a slave named Thaddeus and in doing so liberates him physically, socially, and spiritually. Christ dies as a ransom in the sense that he exchanges his life for the freedom of his followers. Trocmé writes, "What does 'being a ransom' entail? It demands serving others to the point of losing one's life, like the good shepherd in John 10:1-21. And it involves exchanging one's life for the life of a prisoner, like the *goel* of the Old Testament."[146]

Trocmé very much aligns the work of Christ with the *goel* of the Hebrew Bible. The *goel* was a kinsman who avenged the murder of the innocent by putting the murderer to death, as well as the one who redeemed relatives who had lost their land or becomes slaves. The *goel* was also supposed to marry the wife of a deceased relative. The work of the *goel* therefore has both retaliatory and redemptive aspects. Trocmé understands the work of

---

[144] Trocmé, *Jesus and the Nonviolent Revolution*, 147. See also 151: "One's neighbor's physical wellbeing is as important as his spiritual life; the healing of the body and the healing of the soul are joined in a single operation." Trocmé also explains on page 39: "The power of salvation is such that it brings with it acts of liberation."

[145] Trocmé, *Angels and Donkeys*, 101-119.

[146] Trocmé, *Jesus and the Nonviolent Revolution*, 140.

Christ on the cross in terms of redeeming those held captive (both physically and spiritually), but also in terms of undoing the laws of retaliation and vengeance that create captives.[147] In this way Christ's work is similar to the *goel* in that he brings about redemption, but it is different in that rather than get revenge he challenges systems of vengeance and retribution.

Through the cross humans are therefore set free, but on the cross Christ also takes on the world's violence and in doing so challenges the ways of the world that lead to such violence. Trocmé explains that "The cross breaks cycles of violence" and in doing so opens up radically new possibilities for the world.[148]

Trocmé's understanding of salvation not only involves individuals and social realities, but also the entire universe. He explains, "Jesus the Messiah will return, because his final aim is to save the entire cosmos. There will be redemption, not just for individuals, but for the whole world. His kingdom will come fully to the earth, just as it is in heaven."[149]

The Kingdom of God

The ethical commitments that led Trocmé to make Le Chambon a place of refuge were grounded in a vision of God's reign. The kingdom of God that Trocmé writes about is "both earthly and heavenly, present and future."[150] It is already here, as was foretold by the prophets and exemplified in the life and teachings of Jesus, but it is not yet fulfilled. It is a

---

[147] Trocmé, *Jesus and the Nonviolent Revolution*, 10-11.

[148] Ibid., 11 & 152.

[149] Ibid., 113.

[150] Ibid., 53.

kingdom of "great reversal," where the last are first, the poor are blessed, and shalom prevails.[151] Living for the kingdom is about bringing every aspect of life under God's rulership.[152]

Jesus' message of Jubilee was central to Trocmé's understanding of the kingdom of God. The Jubilee that Jesus preached about – a time when slaves were freed, debts forgiven, and injustice overcome – was the preeminent sign of God's kingdom here on earth.[153] The Jubilee that Jesus announced was based in the Hebrew Scriptures, and involves freedom, release, as well as restoration.[154] It was meant to "reestablish justice and give the weak their place in society" and "prevented the accumulation of capital in the hands of a few."[155] The Hebrews were to remember their time as slaves in Egypt and in light of this experience periodically forgive debts, let the land lie fallow, and free Hebrew slaves.[156] The Jubilee is a primary example of God's work of bringing about the restoration of all things.[157] Central to Jubilee and Trocmé's understanding of the kingdom of God were the practices of justice and compassion for the marginalized.

---

[151] Trocmé, *Jesus and the Nonviolent Revolution*, 71. Trocmé also asks in his chapter on "The 'Politics' of Jesus," "What did Jesus and his disciples experience?" and answers, "The poor, the sick, and the outcast gave an extraordinary reception to their proclamation of the kingdom" (48).

[152] Ibid., 57.

[153] Ibid., 103.

[154] Ibid., 19.

[155] Ibid., 146 & 21.

[156] Ibid., 22.

[157] Ibid., 63.

Disciples of Christ are to commit their lives to the kingdom of God, to helping the poor, and to participating in God's restoration of the world.[158] The life of the disciple is not just about lofty ideas, but about engaging in concrete acts of healing and liberation.[159] In fact, Trocmé argues that the life of discipleship is about putting the Jubilee into practice. This means discerning with the Spirit's help how to adapt the principles of Jubilee to new situations. He writes, "The church that announces God's Jubilee, and puts it into practice as the Spirit blows, will show practical solutions to the problems of exploitation, oppression, inequality, and a whole host of other human evils. When this happens, the church will once again find its place in the world."[160]

Trocmé calls the process of discerning God's will for the world today the "algebra of the kingdom." Because of the differences between biblical times and the contemporary period, he does not think social ethics should be approached like simple arithmetic. For example, the notion of the "state" in scripture and the "state" in contemporary society are quite different. Yet, it is possible to have a social ethic based in scripture if it follows more of an algebraic approach than that of simple arithmetic. Trocmé writes, "When Jesus told his disciples, 'You are the salt of the earth . . . you are the light of the world . . . you are the eye of the social body . . . you are my witnesses,' he was not teaching them the 'arithmetic' of the kingdom of God, that is, the technique of performing operations of absolute values. Rather,

---

[158] Trocmé, *Jesus and the Nonviolent Revolution*, 53.

[159] Ibid., 113.

[160] Ibid., 67.

he was revealing the 'algebra' of the kingdom of God, that is, the 'functions and relations' between unknown values."[161]

Discernment is therefore critical to figuring out what it means to implement the principles of Jubilee in today's world. It is important to recognize, however, that because the kingdom of God and the practice of Jubilee bring about great reversals there will be resistance to them. Those with privilege and power will not want to hear this message, and disciples of Christ will therefore face trials and tribulations. We see this first and foremost in the life of Christ. Trocmé explains, "This Jubilee upset both human tradition and religious scruples. Consequently, Jesus' adversaries tried to kill him. They were determined to prevent a dangerous revolution that would usurp their influence and power."[162] Christ threatened those with vested interested in the status quo and this is in part what led to his execution on a cross. Disciples of Christ should therefore not expect success, but rather be prepared for failure and apparent defeat. Trocmé was very aware of the reality of evil. He had seen the evil of war firsthand during his youth, and he was keenly cognizant of the atrocities humans were capable of committing against each other. He writes, "Christians must remember that evil is no illusion."[163] Though he was not naïve about the reality of evil, he was also not willing to give up hope and faith that both individuals and societies could change for the

---

[161] Trocmé, *Jesus and the Nonviolent Revolution*, 172.

[162] Ibid., 103 & 105.

[163] Ibid., 160.

better. God's kingdom will ultimately triumph, but this will not always be obvious and one must hold fast in faith.[164]

Correct vision is therefore very important to maintaining hope and central to Trocmé's discussion of the kingdom of God. Through Christ one gains true understanding of the direction in which the world is moving.[165] It is not simply about being able to perceive the kingdom, or to correctly perceive the world, but rather being able to correctly perceive them together, as two overlapping and essentially related realities. It is only when the kingdom and the world are perceived together that either can be properly understood. Trocmé explains:

> Let us assume that we have two eyes, two visions of the world, an exterior vision that enables us to perceive the sensible world, reality "as it is," and an interior vision, which reveals to us the kingdom, reality "as it should be."
>
> We are like a child who cannot yet superimpose the two images. Each image is flat. Indeed, the world "as it is" has no depth; it is a sequence of phenomena with no rhyme or reason, without origin or end. Similarly the world "as it should and will be," the kingdom, is flat. Isolated from the sensible world, it remains an ideal without substance, because ideas need the support of matter to become realities.
>
> As adults, we should be capable of seeing reality with stereoscopic vision. Our eyes and our spirit should be able to superimpose these two images of the world. Each of these images would at the same time gain relief, depth, and meaning that monocular vision cannot give.
>
> Jesus Christ is the adult whose vision has completely superimposed the world as it is and the kingdom of God, thus gaining a depth of vision into the nature of things, and into the origin and the end of humanity. How can we ever find a correct vision of the world? A sure place to stand? Only if we make the "muscular" effort necessary to gain a stereoscopic vision of the world as Jesus saw it: "Behold, the kingdom of God is at hand."[166]

---

[164] Trocmé, *Jesus and the Nonviolent Revolution*, 156-157.

[165] Trocmé, *The Politics of Repentance*, 47.

[166] Trocmé, *Jesus and the Nonviolent Revolution*, 180-181.

In many ways it was Trocmé's ability to perceive the world and the kingdom of God together with clarity that empowered him to make the Plateau a place of refuge. Because of his commitment to the kingdom of God he saw Nazi propaganda for what it was, and because of his ability to see the world with clarity he was able to put into practice what he understood to be the values of the kingdom of God.

Ethics

Trocmé's social ethics are very much tied to both his christology and his understanding of the kingdom of God. It is the kingdom of God that defines social ethics, and it is by following Christ that we know what it means to live for the kingdom of God. "Jesus carved a new path into the hardness of human realities, a path he trod first, carrying on his shoulders the way of the cross and all the requirements of the kingdom of God: social justice, radical transformation, commitment to truth, and personal regeneration. These are the materials with which he builds the kingdom of God."[167] Christ therefore exemplifies the ethical values of the kingdom, values by which his followers are to live.

Trocmé places Jesus' teachings in the context of the reign of God and explains that as one obeys those teachings one participates in the future that is to come. For example he clarifies that Jesus' command to "sell your possessions and give to the poor" was "neither a counsel of perfection, nor a constitutional law founding a utopian state. It was rather a joyful announcement to be put into practice here and now in A.D. 26 as a 'refreshment'

[167] Trocmé, *Jesus and the Nonviolent Revolution*, 107.

foreshadowing the restitution of all things."[168] Part of the work of Christ and his disciples is therefore planting the seeds of the future in the present.[169]

For Trocmé the life of discipleship is a life of action. It does not simply involve belief in doctrinal propositions about Christ, but is a day to day journey of trying to discern God's will and God's desires for the world. And it is a hopeful journey, in that Trocmé believes in the possibility of change, on both personal and social levels. The call of the disciple is essentially a call from the future that is heard in the present: the Christian life is about trying to bring about God's future in the present. Trocmé explains, "knowing that God can change both people and their situations, the disciple of Jesus can help bring into being God's future for humanity."[170]

Belief and praxis therefore go hand in hand. Trocmé's ministry was a testimony to the essential connection between theological convictions and action. In his book *The Politics of Repentance* he addresses this connection: "Thought and action are one. Separated they go round and round in circles and peter out. Together, as Jesus taught, they are the Life, or better, the Way and the Truth."[171]

---

[168] Trocmé, *Jesus and the Nonviolent Revolution*, 38.

[169] Ibid., 113: Jesus "does not offer us an abstract kingdom of ideas, but redemptive actions of healing and liberation. Jesus came from God and returned to God, but only after having planted the seeds of the future: the kingdom on this earth. And Jesus the Messiah will return, because his final aim is to save the entire cosmos. There will be redemption, not just for individuals, but for the whole world. His kingdom will come fully to the earth, just as it is in heaven."

[170] Ibid., xix.

[171] Trocmé, *The Politics of Repentance*, vii.

Central to Christian praxis is caring for the poor and the marginalized. Trocmé does not explicitly say that God shows a "preferential option for the poor," a phrase developed by Gustavo Gutiérrez, but his ethics resonate with many theologians of liberation in this regard. He writes, "What matters primarily to God is the lot of the poor."[172] He believes that Christ demonstrated God's radical care and concern for the poor, and that God will eventually bring about full restoration for the poor. God's good news for the poor is therefore bad news for the rich. God asks the rich to participate in this through the practice of Jubilee, but "God will, one day, entirely reestablish the poor, with or without the help of the rich."[173]

Likewise, in his children's sermons he continually gives examples of how the poor are the ones who welcome Christ, while the rich turn him away. In his sermon "The Rich Man and the Poor Man" the rich man turns away Mary and Joseph because they cannot afford his exorbitant rates for overnight accommodations, while the poor man welcomes the holy family into his meager abode, and it is there that the Messiah is born.[174]

Trocmé's ethics are therefore bound to his understanding of the kingdom of God and essentially involve reaching out to one's neighbor in need. He writes, "Any endeavor to serve the needs of others, especially those that benefit children, the persecuted, prisoners, the exploited, the aged, the infirm, will advance God's kingdom, even if only minutely."[175]

---

[172] Trocmé, *Jesus and the Nonviolent Revolution*, 39.

[173] Ibid.

[174] Trocmé, *Angels and Donkeys*, 9-15.

[175] Trocmé, *Jesus and the Nonviolent Revolution*, 151.

Following Trocmé's leadership, the people of the Plateau welcomed children, the persecuted, former prisoners, the exploited, and the aged and infirm and embodied Trocme's vision of discipleship in God's kingdom.

CHAPTER FOUR

NARRATIVE AND FORMATION

> Communities formed by a truthful narrative must provide the skills to transform fate into destiny so that the unexpected, especially as it comes in the form of strangers, can be welcomed as a gift.
>
> —Stanley Hauerwas[176]

The Importance of Narrative

Almost all scholars who have written about Le Chambon recognize the importance of the Huguenot narrative in this community's willingness to become a place of refuge for the persecuted. The Chambonnais were keenly aware of the religious persecution their ancestors had experienced and it made them more sympathetic to those who were persecuted for their religion prior to and during World War II.

Likewise, narrative is generally recognized as an important category in theology and ethics. Scholars such as Hans Frei, James William McClendon, Alasdair MacIntyre, George Lindbeck, and Stanley Hauerwas have done much to foster the recognition of the important role narrative can play in biblical interpretation, theology, and ethics. Yet, while narrative is generally regarded as an important theme in theology and ethics, scholars employ the concept in a variety of ways, and therefore the idea of narrative is admittedly ambiguous at times.[177] There are also a number of critical questions about which scholars continue to

---

[176] Stanley Hauerwas, *A Community of Character: Toward a Constructive Christian Social Ethic* (Notre Dame: University of Notre Dame Press, 1981), 10.

[177] Of this George W. Stroup writes, "Clearly, narrative has become a popular theme in theology. But at the same time, there is little if any agreement in the literature as to what is meant by narrative. The term is used to refer to various literary genres, everything from parable to gospel to autobiographies. Nor is there any agreement about why narrative is an important category for theology or about what role it should play in

debate. For example, while scripture does represent a narrative in some ways, there are aspects of scripture that are not narrative, but rather poetic or legal in nature. How do these genres of scripture relate to the idea of scriptural narrative? Likewise, the Christian tradition is often depicted as the on-going story of God's relationship with God's people. But this raises the similar question of whether there is one narrative of the Christian tradition or multiple narratives?[178] If there are multiple narratives, how is their relationship to be understood? Relatedly, contemporary theology has been marked by an increased recognition of how certain voices have been excluded from, or unheard, in past theological discussions. This raises the question of how disparate voices are to be understood in light of the category of narrative. What about the voices of those who have not been included in the narrative at all? And finally, a narrative is often understood to be a definitive story. But, in regard to theology and ethics, should it be understood as a definitive story, or more as a continuing conversation?[179]

It is beyond the scope of this dissertation to settle all scholarly disputes about the role of narrative in theology and ethics. This chapter does, however, seek to explore the role of narrative in the witness and formation of the church by examining one particular

---

biblical interpretation and theological construction. Consequently, it is accurate to say that there has been widespread interest in the role narrative might play in theological construction, but that there is no agreement about what the program or agenda should be and about how narrative should be used in theology." George W. Stoup, "Narrative Theology," in *A New Handbook of Christian Theology*, ed. Donald W. Musser and Joseph L. Price (Nashville: Abingdon, 1992), 323.

[178] See Samuel Wells, *Transforming Fate Into Destiny: The Theological Ethics of Stanley Hauerwas* (Eugene, OR: Cascade Books, 1998), 63.

[179] Ibid., 64.

community's theological and ethical convictions. While there has been a great deal written about the importance of narrative, unfortunately these discussions and debates often occur primarily on a theoretical level. For example one of the major criticisms of Stanley Hauerwas's work is that he talks about a church that does not exist (though the merits of this criticism can be debated). In any case, while the idea that narrative is important in theology and ethics is not new, Le Chambon can provide a critical case study of how narrative can function in the theological convictions and ethical values of a Christian community. In a sense it can provide hard data through which the concept of narrative can be engaged, critically analyzed, and assessed. From such analysis this chapter will offer insights about narrative that may be helpful to contemporary religious communities facing questions about Christian discipleship and the witness of the church in society.

While many theologians and ethicists have written on the topic of narrative, it is worth noting that Philip Hallie, who was one of the first to write extensively about Le Chambon, explicitly acknowledges the importance of narrative in ethics. About ethics he writes, "It must concern itself with the *story* of what individuals do in the context of the story of their times." He continues: "Narrative, plot, and character, especially when the characters involved in the action are surrounded and pervaded by a world intimately involved in their deeds and passions, can help us to understand 'good' and 'evil' in large, clear, and concrete terms. And narrative can show us the many gray areas between good and evil, as well as the

many differences of opinion about what kind of person or action *is* good or evil."[180] Hallie's study of Le Chambon leads him to recognize the importance of narrative in the formation of moral development in general. Likewise, he undoubtedly sees his work of telling the story of Le Chambon as passing on a narrative that has great ethical significance.[181] In some ways, this chapter has the same goal of relating a narrative of great ethical significance and reflecting on extraordinary examples of Christian living in order to see what can be learned from their lives and stories.

Déjà Vu: Remembering the Huguenot Narrative of Persecution and Exile

Central to the argument of this dissertation is the idea that narratives, or stories, play a critical role in shaping moral character and behavior, and are therefore of vital importance to any conversation about Christian ethics. Having situated the community on the Plateau Vivarais-Lignon in the context of the Huguenot narrative of persecution and exile, this section will specifically explore the influence of this narrative on the community's decision to open their doors to those in need. In doing so, it will highlight the paradigmatic nature of narrative in theological ethics and ecclesial praxis.

While the soil on the Plateau Vivarais-Lignon was not particularly ideal for farming, it was rich with memory, and those memories provided the fertile ground for compassionate

---

[180] Philip Hallie, *Lest Innocent Blood Be Shed: The Story of the Village of Le Chambon and How Goodness Happened There* (New York: Harper & Row, 1979), 280.

[181] Hauerwas and Willimon relate this task to Christian ethics as they write, "So the church can do nothing more 'ethical' than to expose us to significant examples of Christian living. In fact, our ethical reflection, at its best, is usually nothing more than reflection on significant examples." Stanley Hauerwas and William H. Willimon, *Resident Aliens: Life in the Christian Colony* (Nashville: Abingdon Press, 1989), 97.

action toward those in need. Though the most severe forms of persecution of the Huguenots ended centuries before the most severe forms of persecution of the Jews began, this historical consciousness was alive in the memories of the Chambonnais and enabled them to empathize quickly with the situation of the Jewish refugees who began arriving at the village train station in increasing numbers.[182] When the first refugees stepped off the train, the stories of their ancestors provided the Chambonnais with a paradigm of what to do in such a situation: a paradigm of empathy and resistance. Philip Hallie recounts that in almost every interview he did with the villagers of Le Chambon, at some point they would say, "'It was the most natural thing in the world to help these people.'"[183] Because their ancestors had been persecuted, they empathized with those arriving at their doors, and decided to open them widely. Magda Trocmé, also attests to the importance of the Huguenot narrative in shaping the ethics of the community. She explains that it was this history that prepared them for what they did.[184] Because their ancestors had been persecuted, they were prepared to extend hospitality and compassion to the persecuted Jewish refugees. Likewise, in response to the question of why the community went along

---

[182] In her unpublished account of the events that occurred in Le Chambon, Lesely Maber, who was a teacher in the village, explains. "Though the persecutions are long since past, France's Protestants have still not forgotten their martyrs. Every summer, a service is held under the old chestnut-trees that surround the *Musee du Desert*, once a centre of armed Huguenot resistance in the south of the Cévennes. Every Whit Monday, the Protestants of our region gather, not far from Le Chambon as the crow flies, under the trees around the house that was once the home of the Durand family. Early in the eighteenth century, Pierre Durand, a young 'wilderness' pastor, was hanged at Montpellier, Marie, his little sister, spent thirty-eight years in captivity in the *Tour de Constance* on the delta of the Rhone refusing, as did her fellow-prisoners, to gain her freedom by abjuring." *Bundle of the Living*, André and Magda Trocmé Papers, Swarthmore College Peace Collection, Swarthmore, PA.

[183] Hallie, *Lest Innocent Blood Be Shed*, 21.

[184] Pierre Sauvage, *Weapons of the Spirit*, DVD (Los Angeles: The Chambon Foundation, 1989).

with Theis' and Trocmé's plan to make the village a place of refuge, one villager sums it up: "'What they were asking us to do was very much like what Protestants have done in France ever since the Reformation. Pastors were hidden here in Le Chambon from the sixteenth century through the period of the 'desert' in the eighteenth century. What we did was *le reste*, the traces of what was being done here for centuries.'"[185]

This history not only made them empathetic to the situation of the refugees, it fostered a spirit of suspicion toward state ideologies and agendas, particularly those ideologies and agendas that led to persecution of religious minorities. In many ways, it gave them the eyes to see clearly what was happening, and the resilience to do something about it.[186] Burns Chalmers, who worked with the American Friends Service Committee in Marseilles, and was centrally involved in the plan to shelter refugees in Le Chambon, attests to this sense of clarity and resilience. Philip Hallie explains, "According to Chalmers, centuries of persecution had given the Huguenots, and Trocmé in particular, what Chalmers calls 'a sturdy quality.' Being a minority had helped make them clear-cut in their thinking and firm in their convictions."[187] Hallie elaborates: "The history of the Protestants in France, and specifically the history of the Protestants in The Mountain, in the two adjoining villages of Le Mazet and Le Chambon, had prepared them for a certain kind of resistance to

---

[185] Hallie, *Lest Innocent Blood Be Shed*, 179.

[186] Bryan Stone points to the importance of clarity of vision as he writes, "One of the most important functions of narrative in any practical theology is the cultivation of our skills in 'seeing.'" Bryan Stone, *Evangelism after Christendom: The Theology and Practice of Christian Witness* (Grand Rapids: Brazos Press, 2007), 41.

[187] Hallie, *Lest Innocent Blood Be Shed*, 132.

governmental authorities."[188] The narrative of their ancestors provided an alternative lens through which they saw the world and interpreted current events. It enabled them to see the implications of the state's anti-Semitic policies with a sense of clarity, and to act with a sense of moral conviction.

Living Into the Biblical Narrative

Yet, it was not just their ancestors' stories that were important in shaping the theological convictions and ethical practices of this community, but also the stories of Israel and Jesus. Magda Trocmé, explains that "the peasant population was well-developed in its reading of the Bible . . ."[189] The assistant pastor of the Reformed Church in Le Chambon also attests to the importance of the biblical narrative in shaping the community's ethics. He writes about the people of Le Chambon, "They are the sons and daughters of the Huguenots, who suffered persecution for two hundred years and remained true to their faith by their reading of the Bible."[190] Likewise, Georgette Barraud, who ran a boarding school for children in Le Chambon points to the importance of the scriptural narrative in motivating their actions. In an interview with Pierre Sauvage she explains, "It happened so naturally, we can't understand the fuss. It happened quite simply . . . What happened had a lot to do with

---

[188] Hallie, *Lest Innocent Blood Be Shed*, 167.

[189] "Histoire des débuts du Collège Cévenol," *College* Cevenol (Chambon-sur-Lignon: Fondation André Trocmé, 1972), 1-2, quoted in Van der Zanden, "The Plateau of Hospitality," 177.

[190]See Édouard Théis's article about "André Trocmé" in *Reconciliation* (1976): 26, André Trocmé and Magda Trocmé Papers, Swarthmore College Peace Collection, Swarthmore, PA.

people still believing in something. The Bible says to feed the hungry, to visit the sick. It's a normal thing to do."[191]

Scripture shaped the ethos of the community in such a way that caring for the stranger was simply the "normal thing to do." Moreover, scripture not only provided the impetus for the Chambonnais's care for strangers, but also for their resistance to Nazi ideology. In his first sermon in Le Chambon, Trocme explained, "'No government can force us to kill; one has to find a way to resist Nazism without killing people,' such as by following the biblical command of 'Love thy neighbor as thyself,' the Sermon on the Mount, the Parable of the Good Samaritan, and the religious principles of, 'one should obey God rather than men.'"[192]

In his efforts to foster an ethos of care for the stranger, Trocmé not only drew on the New Testament, but also looked back to the Hebrew Scriptures and the narrative of Israel's experience of exile. Records indicate that in March of 1939 he based one of his sermons on Deuteronomy 10:19 – "You shall also love the stranger, for you were strangers

---

[191] Sauvage, *Weapons of the Spirit*. Elisabeth Koenig, who was sheltered in the Trocmé household for a period of time, also draws connections between the villagers' willingness to help and the scriptural narrative. She explains, "The villagers were simply people who read the Bible everyday and quite literally tried to live by it." Quoted in Ken Ringle, "Trail to Le Chambon: World War II Survivor Elizabeth Koenig's Remarkable Journey," *The Washington Post*, January 19, 1990.

[192] Quoted in Mordecai Paldiel, *The Righteous Among the Nations: Rescuers of Jews During the Holocaust* (Jerusalem: The Jerusalem Publishing House and Yad Vashem, 2007), 490. When asked what motivated the rescue activities on the Plateau in Pierre Sauvage's documentary *Weapons of the Spirit*, Édouard Theis and Mme Brottes both refer to the parable of the Good Samaritan. The villagers of the Plateau also regularly saw the admonition to "love one another," as it was inscribed in stone above the front entrance of the Reformed Temple.

in the land of Egypt"(NRSV).[193] Thus Trocmé reminded his parishioners to understand their own story in the context of the Hebrew Scriptures, and to remember their own experience of exile. While the exact content of Trocmé's sermon is unknown, it is interesting and informative to situate Deuteronomy 10:19 within its broader scriptural context, as this context likely informed Trocmé's understanding of the passage. Deuteronomy 10:17-20 reads:

> For the LORD your God is a God of gods and Lord of lords, the great God, mighty and awesome, who is not partial and takes no bribe, who executes justice for the orphan and the widow, and who loves the strangers, providing them food and clothing. You shall also love the stranger, for you were strangers in the land of Egypt. You shall fear the LORD your God; him alone you shall worship; to him you shall hold fast, and by his name you shall swear. (NRSV)

Trocmé encouraged his parishioners to reflect on their own experience as aliens in order to foster a sense of compassion toward those who were being forced into alien status. He did so, however, not simply by commending them to remember the Huguenot narrative, but by making connections with the Hebrew scriptures, specifically to a text that talks about justice for the widow and orphan, as well as feeding and clothing the stranger in need.[194]

Besides the Sunday morning sermons, there are several other incidents that attest to the importance of the biblical narrative in shaping the ethics of this community. For example, when Trocmé, Theis, and Darcissac were eventually arrested and imprisoned, one of the villagers sent along a roll of toilet paper with them as a gift. When Trocmé opened the

---

[193] François Boulet, 'L'Attitude Spirituelle des Protestants devant les Juifs Réfugiés,' in *Le Plateau Vivarais-Lignon*, ed. Pierre Bolle (Le Chambon-sur-Lignon: Société d' Histoire de la Montagne, 1992), 402-403

[194] Their willingness to provide hospitality may have also been influenced by the "cities of refuge obligation commanded by the laws of Moses." Paldiel, *The Righteous Among the Nations*, 491.

toilet paper, he found that the villager had thought not only about Trocmé's physical needs while in prison, but also about his spiritual life. Written in pencil on the sheets of toilet paper were verses from the Bible.

Another example of the importance of scripture in shaping the ethics of the community of Le Chambon is the collection of children's sermons written by André Trocmé and published by his daughter Nelly Trocmé Hewett. In her opening to the collection, Trocmé Hewett specifically acknowledges the importance of narrative in shaping this community's ethical practices. After describing the rescue work of the villagers, she writes, "The stories in this book are part of that story. For the courage to do what one knows one should do is very often sparked by the memory of a story."[195] The theological and ethical themes of these sermons are examined throughout this dissertation, yet, in relation to the theme of scriptural narrative it is interesting that Trocmé Hewett specifically acknowledges the importance of narrative in shaping the ethical actions of the community. As she points out, the biblical stories that formed the basis of Trocmé's children's sermons were a part of the story of the community. Her statement demonstrates that the community understood itself to be living into the biblical stories that were told to the children of the parish each Christmas Eve.

Likewise, in relation to living into the scriptural narrative, it is important to acknowledge the role of small groups in nurturing the theological convictions and ethical values of some of the villagers. Many members of the church regularly met in small groups

---

[195] Nellie Trocmé Hewett, "Before You Read These Stories . . . ," in *Angels and Donkeys: Tales for Christmas and Other Times*, trans. Nelly Trocmé Hewett (Intercourse, PA: Good Books, 1998), 1.

to study the Bible. These groups, which were comprised primarily of young members of the congregation, focused on discernment and application of scripture. During the occupation, these groups not only fostered spiritual development, but also provided the critical social networks necessary to carry out the rescue work of the community.[196] In a sense, these two activities cannot be disconnected, as reflection upon and application of biblical ideas is largely what compelled the people of the Plateau to engage in such radical practices of hospitality.

Therefore, while it is important to recognize the role of the Huguenot narrative in shaping the actions of this community, it is also critical to acknowledge the centrality of the stories of Israel and Jesus in the lives and ethical convictions of most of the people of Le Chambon. They understood their lives in light of the biblical stories, as well as the stories of their ancestors, and this consciousness undoubtedly contributed to their sense of obligation to those in need. These narratives also enabled the people of the Plateau to see an alternative picture of reality. While he is not specifically writing about the village of Le Chambon, Gabriel Fackre describes the situation well:

> The Christian community must get the story straight also because the world is aggressively telling its own tale. Assailed by its messages on every side, we are tempted to believe they are true . . . . To these half-truths and full fictions must be juxtaposed another scenario. It will be strange to the ears and eyes of modernity, a counter-word and counter-vision. Christian Storytelling keeps alive this set of counter-perceptions so that the Church may be what it is, rather than be made over in the image of the regnant culture.[197]

---

[196] Hallie, *Lest Innocent Blood Be Shed*, 17.

[197] Gabriel Fackre, *The Christian Story: A Narrative Interpretation of Basic Christian Doctrine*, 3rd ed. (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1996), 2.

Competing Stories, Conflicting Ideals

Yet there were plenty of other Christians in Europe at the time who were presumably reading their Bibles and did nothing to help. Other European children heard biblical stories on Christmas Eve. While it is difficult, perhaps impossible, and certainly beyond the scope of this dissertation to pinpoint the precise differences in hermeneutical perspective between the Chambonnais and the majority of European Christians, examining how scripture functioned in the community in relation to other factors, such as their Huguenot history, can provide a perspective that is helpful in relation to the discussion of biblical interpretation.

For one, the people of the Plateau seemed to identify with the biblical stories and with the stories of their ancestors more so than with the story of France and being French. It is not that they did not consider themselves French, but this identity appears to have been secondary, or at least not as significant. In this sense, the biblical stories and those of their ancestors fostered a sense of having an alternative story to the predominant stories of the nation and surrounding society.[198] Therefore, when the state requested allegiance to its story through actions such as turning in Jewish refugees, the people of Le Chambon and the

[198] Of the importance of narrative in ecclesial ethics Bryan Stone writes, "A church that lacks the ability to counter other narratives is a church adrift, a church that is hopelessly *civil*, a church that can never be the eschatological people of God for the world." Stone, *Evangelism after Christendom*, 114.

surrounding communities resisted. Their primary allegiance was not to the story of the nation-state, but to the Judeo-Christian story.[199]

At the time, the people of the Plateau were considered subversive, and certainly could have been killed for their allegiances. And yet retrospectively, most people who know the story of Le Chambon believe the Chambonnais acted righteously. In July, 2004 the French president, Jacques Chirac, visited Le Chambon and paid tribute to the actions of the villagers during World War II (though these actions were completely against the laws of the land at the time they occurred). Of Le Chambon Chirac declared:

> Here, in adversity, the soul of the nation manifested itself. Here was the embodiment of our country's conscience. Le Chambon-sur-Lignon is a place of memory. A place of resistance. A place symbolizing a France true to her principles, faithful to her heritage, true to her genius.
>
> On this high plateau, with its harsh winters, in solitude, sometimes in poverty, often in adversity, women and men have long upheld the values that unite us. In what was one of the most deprived areas of our country, standing up to all the dangers, they chose courage, generosity and dignity. They chose tolerance, solidarity and fraternity. They chose the humanist principles that

---

[199] In some ways this points to Hans Frei's discussion of the role of narrative in church history. In the *Eclipse of Biblical Narrative*, Frei explains that throughout most of church history the "world of the Bible" was understood to be the "real world" and life was interpreted through the "real world" of the Bible. Frei explains that during the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries a reversal took place, and the biblical world was no longer the primary paradigm, but rather had to be interpreted in light of the modern world. Of biblical interpretation by the eighteenth century he writes, "It is no exaggeration to say that all across the theological spectrum the great reversal had taken place; interpretation was a matter of fitting the biblical story into another world with another story rather than incorporating that world into the biblical story." Hans Frei, *The Eclipse of Biblical Narrative: A Study in Eighteenth and Nineteenth Century Hermeneutics* (Chelsea, MI: BookCrafters, 1974), 130. See also Charles Campbell, "Hans W. Frei," in *A New Handbook of Christian Theologians*, ed. Donald W. Musser and Joseph. Price (Nashville: Abingdon Press, 1996), 151-157. In many ways, the community of Le Chambon illustrates Frei's distinction, in that they interpreted the world in light of the biblical story, rather than vice versa. Their primary allegiance was to the Judeo-Christian story, rather than to the story of the nation-state. George Lindbeck also highlights this point as he writes of the biblical texts, "For those who are steeped in them, no world is more real than the ones they create. A scriptural world is thus able to absorb the universe. It supplies the interpretive framework within which believers seek to live their lives and understand reality." George Lindbeck, *The Nature of Doctrine: Religion and Theology in a Postliberal Age* (Louisville: Westminster John Knox Press, 1984), 117.

> unite our national community and serve as the basis of our collective destiny – the principles that make France what she is.[200]

Pierre Sauvage, who was born in Le Chambon when his parents were refugees there, and who admits to not being particularly "religious," published a response to Chirac's statement. He writes, "In his speech in Le Chambon, Chirac made no reference to the Hebrew Bible or to the New Testament, to faith or the power of religious convictions. He touched only lightly on the 'Protestant Mountain's' once determined particularism. He urged his compatriots 'always to carry (their national) heritage with pride.' But had the people of Le Chambon not been motivated to resist the Holocaust by more than mere Frenchness?" Sauvage then goes on to question Chirac's failure to see the religious motivation behind the actions of the community. He writes, "It may be understandable that on the eve of Bastille Day, Chirac chose to end his address in Le Chambon by recalling that France has inscribed on the front of her public edifices the historic call to Liberty, Equality, and Fraternity. But it was not the motto of the Republic that the President could read on the Protestant temple, across the street, that he declined to visit. It was a religious admonition: 'Love One Another.'"[201]

Even though he is not particularly religious, Sauvage's research on the community made him keenly aware of the religious nature of the events that occurred on the Plateau Vivarais-Lignon. It is ironic that sixty years later the French president would say that the people of Le Chambon exemplified the best of the nation's ideals, when in fact the people of

---

[200] Quoted in Pierre Sauvage, "Le Chambon's Challenge Today," *Forward*, October 9, 2004.

[201] Sauvage, "Le Chambon's Challenge Today."

Le Chambon acted in direct resistance to the nation's ideals. Likewise, Chirac tributes the Chambonnais with demonstrating humanistic principles that unite the national community, rather than recognizing that the people of the Plateau were motivated by a very particular religious narrative. This narrative was in conflict with the narrative of the nation-state, and in the case of Le Chambon it was only because the people identified primarily with the Judeo-Christian narrative that they acted as they did.[202]

The Story of the Just

Chirac's speech, delivered in the village of Le Chambon, provides a good illustration of the situated (or narrated) nature of all ethical actions. While he tries to use Le Chambon as an example of universal (or at least universally French) ethical ideals, the facts on the ground suggest that the Chambonnais were motivated by very particular religious ideals, and were shaped more by the Judeo-Christian narrative than universal (French) ideals. Their actions, which in retrospect are considered by most people to have been "just" and "right," were shaped by a particular religious understanding of justice, a notion of justice that was in conflict with the justice of the state at the time. Justice for the Chambonnais meant sheltering refugees; justice for the state meant putting them in interment camps. Chirac's speech, and Sauvage's critique of it, point to a larger discussion in theology and ethics regarding the tradition-dependent character of justice. Alasdair MacIntyre famously

---

[202] Another example of the conflict of narratives occurred when the pastors disobeyed government orders to ring the church bells to honor the head of state on a national holiday. See Patrick Gerard Henry, *We Only Know Men: The Rescue of Jews in France during the Holocaust* (Washington D.C.: The Catholic University of America Press, 2007), 25.

reinvigorated this discussion with his book, *Whose Justice? Which Rationality?*. As Stanley Hauerwas writes,

> The crucial question is not whether an appeal to justice is warranted, but rather, as Alasdair MacIntyre has argued, the more basic issue is 'whose justice.'[203] Indeed the problem is that we have been taught by the Enlightenment to believe that in fact there is a concept of 'justice qua justice' that corresponds to an account of 'rationality qua rationality' which blinds us to the tradition-dependent character of any account of justice. Prior to any account of justice are those societal practices that make appeals to justice intelligible.[204]

The "just" or "righteous" behavior that the Chambonnais demonstrated only makes sense in the context of the Judeo-Christian tradition and their Huguenot narrative. Their understanding of justice was perfectly intelligible in light of their context, though it did not make sense to the wider world at the time. The story of Le Chambon likewise challenges the idea that justice is a neutral idea. The Chambonnais had a radically different sense of justice than the Vichy officials that came to the community in search of Jews, and even a radically different sense of justice than the *maquis*, who were using guerilla tactics to fight off the Germans in nearby areas.

Yet, does this mean that justice is a relative concept? And if so, who is to say that one community's understanding of justice is better than another community's? Does this not simply lead into the quicksand of relativism? While the idea that justice is tradition-dependent can appear to make justice a relative concept, or at least lacking substance, this

---

[203] Alasdair MacIntyre, *Whose Justice? Which Rationality?* (Notre Dame: University of Notre Dame Press, 1988), 1-11.

[204] Stanley Hauerwas, *After Christendom? How the Church Is to Behave If Freedom, Justice, and a Christian Nation Are Bad Ideas* (Nashville: Abingdon Press, 1991), 49.

conclusion is not inevitable. For example, Mark Nation insightfully employs Le Chambon as an example of the reality that justice is tradition-dependent, but that various conceptions of justice are not necessarily equal. He writes:

> What can we learn from the story of Le Chambon that might be helpful in thinking about relativism? The main thing to learn is also the most obvious: truth need not be relativized simply because others believe it is not truth. Everyone and everything outside the parish at Le Chambon were telling these people that Jewish refugees should not be helped. . . .
>
> We ought not to miss two points. First, the issue in France was not one of relativism. Quite the contrary, it was one of competing sets of convictions. Hitler could hardly be accused of being a relativist. One does not order the extermination of eleven million people in concentration camps because one believes one conviction is as good as another. No, in France, as elsewhere in Europe, during World War II there were ample robust convictions to go around. Relativism was not an issue.
>
> What was at issue was the question of who was right. The reigning "objective truth" said the Chambonnais were wrong. But the Chambonnais were not so convinced. That was because the socialization of the community had already deeply convinced them of the truth of the convictions that neighbors and enemies were to be loved, and strangers were to be welcomed.[205]

In addressing questions of relativism, Nation's chapter on Le Chambon points to the reality that we exist within competing narratives.[206] The market, the military, the media, and the memory of Christ all request our allegiance. These narratives are not always conflicting, but often they are. The story of Le Chambon attests to the importance of formation in the

---

[205] Mark Nation, "Living in Another World as One Response to Relativism," in *Theology Without Foundations: Religious Practice and the Future of Theological Truth*, ed. Nancey Murphy, Stanley Hauerwas, and Mark Nation (Nashville: Abingdon Press, 1994), 242.

[206] Trocmé also addresses the issue of competing narratives, or "truths" in a chapter of *The Politics of Repentance* called "What is Truth?" He explains that Hitler's position was that the "German nation is the bearer of a truth which it has not the right to allow to deteriorate. The Jewish race is the bearer of another truth, foreign to the German truth and which challenges it. Our first duty toward our race is to purify it of the foreign presence. Let the Jews quit our soil and return to Palestine, or we will exterminate them. Truth is what serves the German race" (34).

Christian narrative as the primary narrative, the one that determines relationships with other narratives, and calls into question false narratives and ideologies.

Liturgical Practice: Enacting an Alternative Story

If narrative is such a critical category in theology, ethics, and ecclesiology, where are these narratives fostered? Regarding the community of Le Chambon it is important to recognize the role of worship, or liturgical practices, as an enacted counter-narrative. The Chambonnais were deeply influenced by their church and their pastors, who preached about compassion and resistance from the pulpit. Trocmé and Theis delivered one of their most famous sermons on resistance the Sunday after France surrendered to the Nazis. They instructed the congregation:

> The duty of Christians is to use the weapons of the Spirit to oppose the violence that they will try to put on our consciences. We appeal to all our brothers in Christ to refuse to cooperate with this violence . . . . Loving, forgiving, and doing good to our adversaries is our duty. Yet we must do this without giving up, and without being cowardly. We shall resist whenever our adversaries demand of us obedience contrary to the orders of the gospel. We shall do so without fear, but also without pride and without hate.[207]

While liturgy is often seen as simply the ritual of the Sunday morning service, it is, at least in its best sense, about the community enacting a foretaste of the reign of God. In the case of Le Chambon it was this reign that called into question other reigns and reichs. The liturgy of the Sunday service reminded the Chambonnais of their identity, and the God to whom they belonged. In this sense, the liturgy functioned as a counter-narrative to that of

---

[207] Trocmé's and Theis's sermon of June 23, 1940, from the Magda and André Trocmé Papers, Swathmore College Library, Peace Collection; quoted in Charles Moore, introduction to *Jesus and the Nonviolent Revolution*, by André Trocmé, revised and expanded ed. (New York: Orbis Books, 2003), xii.

the surrounding society. It challenged norms of racism, persecution, and violence, and called for love of enemy, non-violent resistance, and service to those in need.

In his discussion of Stanley Hauerwas's theological ethics, Samuel Wells points to this sense of the liturgy. He writes, "The Church is the place where character and narrative – the two great themes of Hauerwas' early work – meet. The community is shaped by the Christian story, and in turn it shapes the character of its members. It does so particularly by their performance of its story, notably in worship, but also in other distinctive practices, such as peacemaking and disciplined forgiving."[208] Building on Well's analysis, one could say that the Chambonnais were in effect performing a story, specifically in their liturgical practices, that helped them resist the reigning story of the time. This story, of the reign of God, calls into question all other stories and authorities that demand human allegiance. Hauerwas points to this as he writes, "The church's first task is to help us gain a critical perspective on those narratives that have captivated our vision and lives. By doing so, the church may well help provide a paradigm of social relations otherwise thought impossible."[209] Or, as Trocmé and Theis admonished their parishioners, witnessing to the reign of God means resisting "whenever our adversaries demand of us obedience contrary to the orders of the gospel."[210]

---

[208] Wells, *Transforming Fate Into* Destiny, 11.

[209] Stanley Hauerwas, "Reforming Christian Social Ethics: Ten Theses (1981)," in *The Hauerwas Reader*, ed. John Berkmann and Michael Cartwright (Durham: Duke University Press, 2001), 115.

[210] Trocmé's and Theis's sermon of June 23, 1940, quoted in Charles Moore, introduction to *Jesus and the Nonviolent Revolution*, xii.

Openness Written Into the Judeo- Christian Narrative

The idea of "narrative" in theology and ethics is sometimes viewed with suspicion because of the problem of one master narrative suppressing marginalized voices. Up until this point in the chapter narrative has been described as somewhat coherent, consistent, and distinctive. Yet, human existence is undoubtedly shaped by multiple and overlapping narratives. While it is important to recognize the conflicting nature of some of the narratives that claim our lives, openness to other narratives is not necessarily negative. While there must be a degree of coherence and consistency in a narrative, a sense of openness to the other is also necessary for the narrative to stay alive, and indeed, it could be argued that this sense of openness is written into the Judeo-Christian narrative.[211] While I would hesitate to claim that the story of Le Chambon definitively demonstrates this understanding of narrative, I do think it points in that direction and the following section will endeavor to explicate the ways this is so.

As mentioned above, in one of his March, 1939 sermons André Trocmé took as his text Deuteronomy 10:19 – "You shall love the stranger, for you were strangers in the land of Egypt" (NRSV).[212] Certainly this spoke to the situation on the Plateau; encouraging the people to remember their own experience as aliens and therefore to welcome, feed, and

---

[211] Bryan Stone points to the need to both faithfully remember the story as well as remain open to new voices as he writes, "One of the greatest challenges of Christian evangelism is faithfully remembering and creatively retelling the story while always listening to new voices, especially those who have been silenced or marginalized by previous telling." Stone, *Evangelism after Christendom*, 60.

[212]Boulet, 'L'Attitude Spirituelle," 403.

clothe those who had recently been made aliens by the state. But besides being a sermon of encouragement for the community, does this text get to a deeper point about narrative? Is there a sense in which, rather than suppress the voices of the marginalized, the alien is necessarily part of the story? Perhaps, it could even be argued that if the story does not include the other (the marginalized, alienated, impoverished), it is not only not a story worth telling, but it is not the Judeo-Christian story at all. The opening line of this paragraph of Deuteronomy is: "So now, O Israel, what does the LORD your God require of you?" In addition to fearing God, walking in God's ways, and serving God with all one's heart and soul, people are to recognize, the passage explains, that since Israel's God "executes justice for the orphan and widow," and "loves the strangers, providing them food and clothing," the people should do likewise. Because the Israelites were strangers in Egypt, they must love the stranger. Israel's God loves strangers. Therefore, if the stranger is neglected, the narrative cannot be that of the God of Israel and Jesus.

Even if it is not regularly enacted in the way it should be, does the Judeo-Christian story not have written into its basic plot a necessary openness to the other?

The story of the Good Samaritan, which was central to the ethical convictions of many of the villagers of Le Chambon, can be interpreted as illustrating this point. The story itself is part of the Judeo-Christian tradition, and is a story with which those who are not even part of the Judeo-Christian tradition are familiar. And yet, in the story itself, it is the other, the stranger, the Samaritan, who is the archetype of compassion. The stranger is written into the narrative, and Jesus' followers are to learn from this stranger. In this sense, a

story that is not open to strangers is not the Judeo-Christian story. The story of the stranger, the Samaritan, becomes an integral part of the story of faith.

Samuel Wells points to the importance of the Judeo-Christian narrative's openness to the stranger in his book *Transforming Fate Into Destiny: The Theological Ethics of Stanley Hauerwas*. He explains that preventing "the Christian story from being a single-line narrative that suppresses subplots, requires a people who are capable of reading in a way that listens to the cry of the oppressed. Such a people is of course formed by the narrative, and thus a hermeneutical spiral develops. . . . To read the Bible faithfully, the community must be similarly open to the truth encountered in the stranger."[213] Narrative openness thus involves the hermeneutical spiral of hearing the cry of the other, and making it our cry as well.

In a sense then, the concept of narrative requires both a critical analysis of the false narratives that claim our lives, and openness to the stranger. While this may sound like a paradox, perhaps it is simply the hermeneutics of discipleship, as the Christian life involves learning to truly read and interpret the world through the Judeo-Christian narrative as well as recognizing the presence of God in the stranger. Openness to the stranger is, in fact, written into the story, and it therefore could be argued that one way of discerning that false stories are operative is that when the stranger knocks, the door stays closed.

---

[213] Wells, *Transforming Fate Into Destiny*, 66. Wells refers to Hauerwas, *A Community of Character*, 64-69 in building this argument.

For the Sake of the World

This chapter has primarily focused on the role of narrative in communal ethical formation. Yet, the purpose of narrative is not only internal to the community. Ultimately the Judeo-Christian narrative is about God's love for the whole world. This community, shaped by a particular narrative, is to be a light to the nations.[214] Its first task is to be faithful to the story itself, but in doing so it witnesses to something that is not only for the community, but for all of creation. Stanley Grenz makes this point in his discussion of narrative theology as he writes, "The Christian community embodies the narrative of God at work in history for the sake of the world. The basic task of Christian ethics, therefore, is to assist the church in being just what it is – the church – the people in whom 'the narrative of God is lived in a way that makes the kingdom visible.'"[215]

When the people of Le Chambon decided to make the Plateau a place of hospitality and refuge, they did not do so because they were concerned about how the wider world would look at their community. They were members of a small secluded village, which many people in France had never heard of, let alone people on other continents. Of this Hallie writes, "From the point of view of the history of nations, something very small had happened here. The story of Le Chambon lacked the glamour, the wingspread of other

---

[214] Mark Nation writes about Le Chambon, "Decades later almost everyone is convinced of the truth of at least some of their convictions. In fact their lives so beautifully displayed their convictions that their story has testified powerfully to millions. Further, it ought not to be missed that they had correlative convictions regarding God, Jesus, the Church, etc. that are at least rendered more credible by the truthfulness of their lives." Mark Nation, "Living in Another World as One Response to Relativism," 243.

[215] Stanley Grenz, *The Moral Quest: Foundations of Christian Ethics* (Downers Grove, Ill: InterVarsity Press, 1997), 195, drawing on Hauerwas, *The Peaceable Kingdom*, 100, 97, and 3 and *A Community of Character*, 1.

wartime events. . . . While the story of Le Chambon was unfolding it was being recorded nowhere."[216]

Yet, their understanding of the Judeo-Christian tradition compelled them to act, even though their actions did not seem to have much significance with regard to the wider outcome of the war, or to the history of the nations. These actions, however, were undoubtedly significant to the 2,500 – 5,000 refugees who found shelter on the Plateau. And while their actions may have seemed miniscule with regard to the bigger picture of world history, there was something powerful enough about them to compel Jacques Chirac to say they represented the "country's conscience" and the country's true principles.[217] While Chirac overlooks the reality that the consciences of the Chambonnais were opposed to the principles of France during World War II, his statement does point to an important aspect of this story. While the wider society rejected the values of the Chambonnais at the time,[218] in retrospect most people, including a subsequent French president, view the Chambonnais as having acted rightly. In this sense, the story of Le Chambon is one of witness to the wider world. While this witness was not what was first and foremost on the minds of the villagers, the faithfulness of their actions has an enduring legacy that cannot be denied, even by

---

[216] Hallie, *Lest Innocent Blood Be Shed*, 8.

[217] Quoted in Pierre Sauvage, "Le Chambon's Challenge Today."

[218] Hauerwas and Willimon write, "Christian ethics is about following this Jew from Nazareth, being a part of his people. Therefore, this ethics will probably not make much sense unless one knows that story, sees that vision, is part of that people." Hauerwas and Willimon, *Resident* Aliens, 102.

nation-states and presidents. The story is not just about communal identity, but is for the sake of the world. Bryan Stone points to this as he writes:

> That is why the very capacity for evangelizing requires that our lives are formed by remembering – not the sort of remembering that is only a mastery of information or memorization of creeds (the path of the tourist), but the saturation of our lives by a story such that its beginning is our beginning, its journey our journey, its end our end. Christians become Christian not merely by hearing a story but by being formed bodily into one. Only as this happens can we become faithful tellers and enactors of that story in a world that is watching and listening, even when we are tempted to think it is not.[219]

While the world did not seem to be watching at the time, the story of Le Chambon has become known across borders and oceans. In a time when war and self-preservation seemed to be the only options, this village, situated on a plateau, witnessed to the possibility of an alternative account of reality.

[219] Stone, *Evangelism after Christendom*, 56.

CHAPTER FIVE

CHARACTER AND COMMUNITY

> We are 'storied people' because the God that sustains us is a 'storied God' whom we come to know only by having our character formed appropriate to God's character. The formation of such character is not an isolated event but requires the existence of a corresponding society – a 'storied society.'
>
> —Stanley Hauerwas[220]

One evening during the winter of 1940-1941 Magda Trocmé heard a knock at her door. When she answered the door she found a Jewish woman standing in front of her, cold and frightened. The woman had found her way to the remote village of Le Chambon-sur-Lignon, France because someone told her that she might find help there. Magda Trocmé immediately welcomed her in, gave her something to eat, and arranged for the woman to stay with a family nearby. The arrival of this woman at the door of the Protestant parsonage of Le Chambon marked the beginning of the community's commitment to sheltering Jewish children, women, and men, as well as other political refugees during the Holocaust.

When Magda encountered the woman at her door her response was, "'Naturally, come in, and come in.'"[221] Philip Hallie recounts that in almost every interview he did with the villagers of Le Chambon, at some point they would say, "'It was the most natural thing

---

[220] Stanley Hauerwas, *The Peaceable Kingdom: A Primer in Christian Ethics* (Notre Dame: University of Notre Dame Press, 1991), 29.

[221] Philip Hallie, *Lest Innocent Blood Be* Shed: *The Story of the Village of Le Chambon and How Goodness Happened There* (New York: Harper & Row, 1979), 120. Hallie reports that some villagers, including Magda Trocmé, were very impatient with questions about what motivated them to help. They did not give detailed answers in response, but simply said that it was the natural thing to do in the situation. Ibid., 20-21.

in the world to help these people.'"[222] Certainly their actions were not natural in that the vast majority of people in war-torn Europe did not act in the same way.[223] If this was the "natural" way to behave the majority of Europeans would have acted with such compassion, and there would have been no Holocaust. This raises the question of what the villagers mean when they say their behavior was "natural." Why was it "natural" for the people of the Plateau Vivarais-Lignon to open their doors, while for most other Europeans it was not?[224]

Likewise, the villagers usually had to make split-second decisions about whether they were going to welcome the stranger in need or keep the door safely shut.[225] There was no time to weigh out the pros and cons. The vast majority chose to respond with hospitality to the refugee at their door. Both their use of the term "natural" and their ability to make quick

---

[222] Hallie, *Lest Innocent Blood Be Shed*, 21. In a conversation with a farmer involved in sheltering Jewish refugees Lesley Maber reports that the woman told her that "the peasants' hospitality is innate. . . ." *Bundle of the Living*, André Trocmé and Magda Trocmé Papers, Swarthmore College Peace Collection, Swarthmore, PA.

[223] Of this Deborah Durland DeSaix and Karen Gray Ruelle explain, "They didn't consider themselves to be heroes. At the time, they didn't talk about what they were doing. They simply acted, without feeling that they were doing anything extraordinary. In their minds, they were simply doing what was right – the normal, decent thing. Sometimes, however, doing the normal, decent thing is heroic." Deborah Durland DeSaix and Karen Gray Ruelle, *Hidden on the Mountain: Stories of Children Sheltered from the Nazis in Le Chambon* (New York: Holyday House, 2007), 242.

[224] N. T. Wright analyzes the relationship between character, virtue and such decisions as he explains, "Virtue, in this strict sense, is what happens when someone has made a thousand small choices, requiring effort and concentration, to do something which is good and right but which doesn't 'come naturally'—and then, on the thousand and first time, when it really matters, they find that they do what's required 'automatically,' as we say."[224] He goes on to argue, "*Virtue* is what happens when wise and courageous choices have become 'second nature.' Not 'first nature,' as though they happened 'naturally.' Rather a kind of second-order level of 'naturalness.'" *After You Believe*, 21. Wright is clear about the discipline involved in becoming a person of character. He explains, "If learning virtue is like learning a language, it is also like acquiring a taste, or practicing a musical instrument. None of these 'comes naturally' to begin with. When you work at them, though, they begin to feel more and more 'natural,' until that aspect of your 'character' is formed so that, at last, you attain the hard-won freedom of fluency in the language, happy familiarity with the taste, competence on the instrument." Ibid., 42.

[225] Hallie, *Lest Innocent Blood Be Shed*, 175.

decisions, even though these decisions could have jeopardized their own lives and the lives of their family members, attest to the role of character in the events that occurred on the Plateau Vivarais-Lignon. While it is beyond the scope of this dissertation to address definitively how character is formed, this chapter will seek to explore the theological and ethical significance of character in light of the events that occurred on the Plateau, paying particularly close attention to the relationship between character, formation, and narrative.

Character, Community, and Decision

While Philip Hallie does not extensively develop his discussion of character, he does point to the important role character played in the events that occurred in Le Chambon. He explains, "In this village the characters of individuals were of immense importance, and most of these individuals were dedicated to protecting human lives instead of destroying them."[226] In comparing the character of the Chambonnais to the characters of those in the wider society Hallie draws on the idea of conscience. He explains that it was the consciences of the people on the Plateau that compelled them to open their doors to refugees as well as that which prohibited them from killing those who were considered enemies.[227] Hallie's use of the term conscience raises the question of how conscience is formed, as conscience is closely

---

[226] Hallie, *Lest Innocent Blood Be Shed*, 11. Of character Hallie also writes, "It is plain that the story of the struggle of Le Chambon is of no special political or military interest. But it is of ethical interest. The word *ethics* can be traced to the Greek word for character, an individual person's way of feeling, thinking, and acting. Ethics is concerned with praising some sorts of character and blaming other sorts." Ibid.

[227] "Following their consciences meant refusing to hate or kill any human being. And in this lies their deepest difference from the other aspects of World War II. Human life was too precious to them to be taken for any reason, glorious and vast though that reason might be. Their consciences told them to save as many lives as they could, even if doing this meant endangering the lives of all the villagers; and they obeyed their consciences." Ibid., 10.

related to character. Yet, it is important to recognize that Hallie is not talking about an individual's conscience, but the conscience of an entire community.[228] The full title of his book is *Lest Innocent Blood be Shed: The Story of the Village of Le Chambon and How Goodness Happened There*. The title begs the question of what makes an entire village "good."[229]

Hallie is also quick to point out that what happened on the Plateau did not occur because of an institution as such, but because of the decisions of many individuals. He writes, "Le Chambon became a village of refuge not by fiat, not by virtue of the decision Trocmé or any other person made, but by virtue of the fact that, after Magda Trocmé's first encounters with refugees, no Chambonnais ever turned away a refugee."[230] Likewise, Magda Trocmé explains, "'If it had been an organization, it could not have worked. . . . When the refugees were there, on your doorstep, in danger, there were decisions that had to be made then and there. . . . Everybody was free to decide swiftly on his own.'"[231] Thus, while the

---

[228] The Righteous Among the Nations award given by Yad Vashem to people who helped Jews during the Holocaust is usually given to individuals. Le Chambon is the only community to be awarded this designation.

[229] It is important to recognize that many of the Chambonnais did not appreciate being called "good." Magda Trocmé asks, "How can you call us 'good'? We were doing what had to be done. Who else could help them? And what has all this to do with goodness? Things had to be done, that's all, and we happened to be there to do them. You must understand that it was the most natural thing in the world to help these people." Quoted in Hallie, *Lest Innocent Blood Be Shed*, 20-21.

[230] Ibid., 196.

[231] Ibid., 199. In reflecting on her research about rescue efforts on the Plateau Christine E. van der Zanden similarly explains, "No one knew what her neighbor did, and no one asked questions. Because rescue was not specifically planned before the war, nor was it centrally organized, it retained an element of spontaneity that lent secrecy to the operation." "The Plateau of Hospitality: Jewish Refugee Life On the Plateau Vivarais-Lignon" (PhD diss., Clark University, 2003), 6.

villagers of Le Chambon were a part of a community, there was a sense in which they independently made decisions to help.

Moreover, the villagers had to keep their actions discreet. They did not talk much with one another about what they were doing for fear that if one person was caught and tortured that person's knowledge might jeopardize the entire village.[232] In this sense there was a paradoxical aspect to the rescue efforts that occurred on the Plateau in that almost everyone was involved, but very few people actually knew what their neighbors were doing. In any case, the reality that the villagers went about sheltering refugees without communicating their actions to each other, and that each villager made the decision on his or her own, strongly attests to the role of character in events that occurred on the Plateau between 1940 and 1944. Likewise, the fact that most individuals in the community made the same decisions points to the connection between character and communal formation.

It is important to note, however, that while the Chambonnais did make decisions about whether they would reach out to the stranger in need or not, they usually did not take long to deliberate on these decisions. They often made them in a matter of seconds. As Magda points out: "When the refugees were there, on your doorstep, in danger, there were decisions that had to be made then and there. . . . Everybody was free to decide swiftly on his own.'"[233] They made decisions and they made them swiftly. The sense of immediacy with which rescuers made decisions to shelter someone has been corroborated by the research of

---

[232] Hallie, *Lest Innocent Blood Be Shed*, 197.

[233] Ibid., 199.

Samuel and Pearl Oliner in their book *The Altruistic Personality: Rescuers of Jews in Nazi Europe*. They write, "Most rescuers reported rarely reflecting before acting. Asked how long it took them to make their first helping decision, more than 70 percent indicated 'minutes.'"[234] Like other rescuers during the Holocaust, most of the Chambonnais did not take time to reflect: they did not take time to weigh out the costs and benefits, the pros and cons. They just opened their doors and "naturally" invited the person inside. There were decisions involved, but these decisions were quick, and the speed with which they made them says something about their character. Perhaps if the Chambonnais had taken the time to think about the potentially fatal consequences of such actions they would have made different decisions, but they did not. They "swiftly" welcomed the stranger in need. Their decisions to help were in line with their deepest convictions, and therefore could be made without much deliberation. Of this type of decision Hauerwas explains, "Thus persons of character or virtue may, from the perspective of others, make what appears to have been momentous and even heroic decisions, but feel that in their own lives they 'had no choice' if they were to continue to be faithful to their own characters."[235] The Chambonnais appear not to have thought of their actions as a choice, but rather as the "natural" thing to do. Welcoming the stranger in need was in line with their deepest values, and thus they acted out of a sense of faithfulness to their own character.

---

[234] Samuel P. Oliner and Pearl M. Oliner, *The Altruistic Personality: Rescuers of Jews in Nazi Europe* (New York: The Free Press, 1988), 169.

[235] Stanley Hauerwas, *A Community of Character: Toward a Constructive Christian Social Ethic* (Notre Dame: University of Notre Dame Press, 1981), 114.

In many ways their decisions reflected a value that they took for granted – that when there is a stranger in need a person must help him or her. Sam Wells explains, "Gradually the villagers took on increasing danger and increasing hunger in addition to the hardships of the Occupation. Eventually André Trocmé established a more formal scheme in some of the houses funded by the Quakers from Marseilles – but this was not a 'decision', so much as an extension of what was already taken for granted."[236] One's character is often comprised of precisely what one takes for granted. Certain values guide a person in ways of which he or she is often not even aware. These values are taken for granted to such a degree that when faced with a decision one may feel like he or she does not even have a choice, there is really no decision to be made. This seems to be the kind of decision-making that occurred on the Plateau.

While the people of the Le Chambon did make individual decisions about whether to provide hospitality to those in need, it is important to recognize that they did so as part of a larger community.[237] Even though they were discreet about their actions, there was a sense in which they were not acting alone. Hallie explains,

> Though they were discreet, as silent and as separate as possible regarding the refugees, the amateurs of Le Chambon had a sense of fellowship with each other in the face of the suffering they were helping to alleviate. Many of them attended the temple sermons of Theis and Trocmé and participated in the weekly discussions with the *responsables* of the parish. Because of such sessions, and because of a feeling that

---

[236] Samuel Wells, *Transforming Fate Into Destiny: The Theological Ethics of Stanley Hauerwas* (Eugene, OR: Cascade Books, 1998), 137.

[237] Likewise, it is important to recognize that throughout the war no one ever denounced a refugee living in Le Chambon or a person hiding a refugee.

> they were, in the words of Madame Eyraud, 'doing something of consequence' (*quelque chose pleine de consequences*), there was a sense of fellowship.[238]

When Hallie speaks of fellowship he points to a deeper communal reality, and this communal reality very much undergirded the morality and ethics of the people on the Plateau. While the villagers made their decisions to help as individuals, the communal reality of which they were a part empowered them to do much more than they could have alone. The community fostered a moral vision as well as opportunities to put that vision into action. As individuals the Chambonnais would have likely felt overwhelmed by the tragic situation in Europe and not have known what to do about it. As a community they found creative ways to respond. Nouwen, McNeill, and Morrison write of this sense of community:

> Our individual ability to serve is quite limited. We might be able to help a few people for a while, but to respond in servanthood to all people all the time is not a realistic human aspiration. As soon as we speak in terms of *we*, however, the picture changes. As a community we can transcend our individual limitations and become a concrete realization of the self-emptying way of Christ. . . . As individuals we cannot be everything to everyone, but as a community we can indeed serve a great variety of needs. Moreover, by the constant support and encouragement of the community we find it possible to remain faithful to our commitment to serve.[239]

The community thus mediates between individuals and the suffering of the world, allowing individuals to engage that suffering and respond to it in ways that they could not imagine

---

[238] Hallie, *Lest Innocent Blood Be Shed*, 198-199.

[239] Henri J. M. Nouwen, Donald P. McNeill, and Douglas A. Morrison, *Compassion: A Reflection on the Christian Life* (New York: Image Books / Doubleday, 1982), 58. Hauerwas and Willimon also attest to the importance of Christian community: "Through the teaching, support, sacrifice, worship, and commitment of the church, utterly ordinary people are enabled to do some rather extraordinary, even heroic acts, not on the basis of their own gifts or abilities, but rather by having a community capable of sustaining Christian virtue. The church enables us to be better people than we could have been if left to our own devices." Stanely Hauerwas and William H. Willimon, *Resident Aliens: Life in the Christian Colony* (Nashville: Abingdon Press, 1989), 81.

otherwise.[240] Le Chambon provides a critical example of such a community. As individuals the villagers would likely have been overwhelmed and bombarded by the tragedy occurring around them, but as a community they were able to come up with creative and constructive responses to this tragedy and thus reach out to those in need in ways they could have never imagined alone.

This is not only true on a functional level, but on a moral level as well. It is through community that one learns what morality is, and what it means to love one's neighbor. Thus it is through community that one's character is formed. Hauerwas and Willimon compare this to learning a language. They explain, "Learning to be moral is much like learning to speak a language. You do not teach someone a language (at least nowhere except in language courses at a university!) by first teaching that person rules of grammar. The way most of us learn to speak a language is by listening to others speak and then imitating them. . . . Ethics can never take the place of community any more than rules of grammar can replace the act of speaking the language."[241] This was certainly true of the language spoken on the Plateau Vivarais-Lignon. The Chambonnais were steeped in the language of scripture and the stories of their ancestors. They listened to those stories, and to each other, and discerned together

---

[240] Nouwen, McNeill, and Morrison, *Compassion*, 55-59.

[241] Hauerwas and Willimon, *Resident Aliens*, 97. George Lindbeck also discusses the way doctrine functions as grammar in *The Nature of Doctrine: Religion and Theology in a Postliberal Age* (Louisville: Westminster John Knox Press, 1984). See also N.T. Wright's discussion of the relationship between virtue and learning a language in *After You Believe: Why Character Matters* (New York: HarperCollins, 2010), 41. He writes, "That is the point at which a second language gives us the clue to how virtue functions: it becomes second nature. Eventually, all being well, you pass beyond the stilted, forced stage to an entirely new sort of 'naturalness.'"

how to speak the language of Christ in their situation. Their community was the critical milieu that helped them become fluent in the language.

Formation in a Community of Character

While it is difficult, and perhaps impossible, to precisely identify how character is shaped, there were a number of institutions in place on the Plateau that fostered character formation in one way or another. In his analysis of Le Chambon, Mark Nation points to this milieu as well as several aspects of life on the Plateau that nurtured this community of character. He writes,

> Why did they live this way? Even before the refugees came to their village the parishioners had grown in their convictions and moral practices that neighbors and enemies were to be loved, that the stranger was to be welcomed. Their pastor, the school, the Bible studies, and their lives themselves all served to communicate that these convictions were true. Thus, when the refugees arrived it was an almost automatic response to reach out to them in love.[242]

While the Chambonnais did make individual decisions to help those in need, certain institutions and patterns of life fostered a sense in which reaching out to the stranger was the natural thing to do. These institutions helped cultivate character and steep the villagers in the language of faith. It is important, therefore, to briefly examine some of the institutions and aspects of life on the Plateau that contributed to the formation of such heroic characters.

---

[242] Mark Nation, "Living in Another World as One Response to Relativism," in *Theology without Foundations: Religious Practice and the Future of Theological Truth*, ed. Nancey Murphy, Stanley Hauerwas, and Mark Nation (Nashville: Abingdon Press, 1994), 242.

Small Groups

One of the influences on character formation, which was discussed in the previous chapter, was the existence of a number of small Bible study groups. In these groups members of the parish community sought to apply scripture to their daily lives and as such these groups became central to the ministry of hospitality on the Plateau. The small groups played a role in what happened in Le Chambon both in a functional sense (as centers of resistance) and a theological-ethical sense (as centers of Christian character formation).

André Trocmé, supervised the small group leaders and placed a great emphasis on the role of small groups in Christian formation. Small groups were central to his own theological and moral development and he therefore spent a considerable amount of time developing the leadership of small groups. Philip Hallie describes the importance of Trocmé's experience as a teenager in a youth group called the Union of Saint-Quentin and the intimacy of fellowship Trocmé experienced there. It was there, in the Union, that Trocmé "learned to feel the power of human solidarity"[243] and there, in the Union, that he was first exposed to the social nature of Christianity. Hallie writes about Trocmé's experience in the Union: "For the rest of his life he sought another union, another intimate community of people praying together and finding in their love for each other and for God the passion and the will to extinguish indifference and solitude. From the union he learned that only in such an intimate community, in a home or in a village, could the Protestant idea

[243] Hallie, *Lest Innocent Blood Be Shed*, 56.

of a 'priesthood of all believers' work. Only in intimacy could people save each other."[244] As a young man Trocmé experienced small groups as a place for both spiritual growth and social outreach; when he became a pastor he recognized the importance of intimate fellowship in both the growth of the individual and the individual's ability to reach out to those in need. The small groups he created became spaces for personal accountability and centers for social responsibility. These small groups were one of the ways character was developed in the community of Le Chambon.

Sermons

With regard to character formation, another central aspect of the ministry of the church was the Sunday sermon. Trocmé and Theis did not shy away from talking about difficult issues from the pulpit. They spoke openly about the need to resist ideologies of hate and violence: to learn to lovingly engage the enemy with the "weapons of the Spirit."[245] Of their sermons Hallie explains:

> The sermons did not propose a neat blueprint for fighting hatred with love. They were not attempts to tell the world or Le Chambon exactly how to overcome Hitler's evil with love. In those last years of the 1930s, the sermons said: Work and look hard

---

[244] Hallie, *Lest Innocent Blood Be Shed*, 57.

[245] André Trocmé and Édouard Theis's sermon of June 23, 1940, from the Magda and André Trocmé Papers, Swarthmore College Library, Peace Collection, quoted in André Trocmé, *Jesus and the Nonviolent Revolution*, ed. Charles E. Moore (Maryknoll, NY: Orbis Books, 2003), xii. On the Sunday after the official visit from Vichy's youth commissioner the pastors told the congregation, "'If an attempt is made to arrest the Jews . . . your christian duty is to hide them and help them escape, thus disobeying unlawful laws.'" See Trocme's unpublished "Memories," André Trocmé and Magda Trocmé Papers, Swarthmore College Peace Collection, Swarthmore, PA. It is also interesting to note that once the war was over Trocmé regularly preached in a nearby German POW camp, delivering the exact same sermons he preached in Le Chambon. On his visits he was always accompanied by a group of church members from Le Chambon, who brought food to the POWs. Trocmé, "Memories."

> for ways, for opportunities to make little moves against destructiveness. The sermons did not tell what those moves should be; they said only that an imitator of Christ must somehow make such moves when the occasion arises. They were preaching an attitude of resistance and of canny, unsentimental watching for opportunities to do something in the spirit of that resistance.[246]

Thus the sermons did not provide blueprints for resistance, but called for individuals to creatively and compassionately respond to diverse situations as they arose. The pastors trusted the character of the parishioners and had faith that they would make the best decisions about what it meant to resist Nazi ideology and to follow Christ in the situations that confronted them. They did not impose rules for how to do so, but rather encouraged their listeners to respond creatively and compassionately as led by their own consciences. Hallie writes about Trocmé's sermons, "As his sermons showed, he believed that if you choose to resist evil, and you choose this firmly, then ways of carrying out that resistance will open up around you. His kind of originality *generated originality* in others. . . . He generated impulses in them, impulses in the direction of imitating Jesus' love and rebellion, and they went on to make those impulses effective."[247] Trocmé trusted the character of his parishioners to such a degree that he knew they would figure out their own ways of making Christ's love alive and known.

In their preaching Trocmé and Theis drew primarily from the texts of the Hebrew Bible and New Testament. Yet, they also read the signs of the times and tried to discern how scripture spoke to what was going on in the world around. They believed the stories of

---

[246] Hallie, *Lest Innocent Blood Be Shed*, 85.

[247] Ibid., 92.

scripture spoke to situations of violence and persecution, and called for compassionate action. In addition to interpreting scripture in light of the contemporary context, Trocmé and Theis also drew upon the tradition of the Huguenot narrative. This story reinforced the words of resistance and compassion that they spoke from the pulpit. Hallie explains, "Behind a Huguenot sermon is the history of a besieged minority trying to keep its moral and religious vitality against great adversity. The sermons of the pastor are one of the main sources of this vitality."[248] This history reminded the parishioners of the difficulties their ancestors had faced and the resiliency of their character. It helped them to realize that they were part of a larger story, and gave them the strength of character to act with justice and compassion in a very unjust and uncompassionate time in history.

The Cévenol School

The Cévenol School was another location where formation occurred on the Plateau Vivarais-Lignon. The school was founded by André Trocmé and Édouard Theis in 1938 in order to prepare students for their *baccalauréats*. Trocmé contacted Theis in 1938 and invited Theis to join him as a part-time pastor at the Reformed Church in Le Chambon and to help give vision and direction to the school. It was, however, not a typical school in that the central mission of the institution included educating the students in a spirit of nonviolence and internationalism.[249] As the world headed toward war the school opened its doors to

---

[248] Hallie, *Lest Innocent Blood Be Shed*, 172.

[249] Ibid., 82. The *École Nouvelle Cévenole* continues its mission today by educating high school students from around the world according to pacifist principles.

educate youth in a spirit of peace. Paradoxically, it was precisely the war that brought greater numbers of students to the school. In 1938, 18 students were enrolled, 40 students attended in 1939, 150 in 1940, 250 in 1941, 300 in 1943, and in 1944 the school had 350 pupils.[250]

This school, however, existed not only for the education of the youth of Le Chambon, but was also a place of education for the young Jewish refugees living in the village. It is estimated that during the war between eighteen and thirty-four percent of the students were Jewish. It is difficult, however, to determine the precise number of Jewish students at the school because many were afraid to formally identify themselves as Jewish.[251] In any case, pupils were accepted regardless of their religious beliefs, nationality, or ability to pay.[252] In the classrooms students of various nationalities, ethnicities, and religious backgrounds intermingled with one another and developed close friendships.[253] Lesley Maber, who taught at the *École Nouvelle Cévenole*, quotes Pastor Theis as saying, "'Young people from countries that used to be enemies will learn to work and play together with

---

[250] François Boulet, "Quelques éléments statistiques," in Bolle et al., *Le Plateau Vivarais-Lignon: Accueil et Résistance 1939-1944* (Le Chambon-sur-Lignon: Société d' Histoire de la Montagne, 1992), 288.

[251] Christine van der Zanden, "The Plateau of Hospitality: Jewish Refugee Life On the Plateau Vivarais-Lignon" (PhD diss., Clark University, 2003), 181.

[252] Because of the school's commitment to pacifist principles they did not, however, allow students to be a part of the *maquis* (armed resistance groups). They had to choose to be students at the ENC or members of the *maquis*, but could not be both at the same time. Ibid., 194.

[253] Victoria Barnett explain that "part of what defines a totalitarian system is its attempt to draw clear lines between different realms of experience, the identities (and fates) of different groups. By so doing, it does not just preserve the 'normality' that enable the perpetrators and bystanders to live in untroubled comfort. It sets the parameters for their identity." Victoria J. Barnett, *Bystanders: Conscience and Complicity During the Holocaust* (Westport, CT: Praeger Publishers, 1999), 95.

mutual respect.'"[254] While the walls of ghettos were being erected in many European cities, boundaries between national and ethnic groups were broken down at the Cévenol School.

Besides becoming acquainted with students from diverse national, ethnic, and religious backgrounds and facilitating that experience for the students, the faculty at the Cévenol School aimed to instill a sense of moral value and purpose into their pupils. Joseph Atlas, a Jewish refugee who resided in Le Chambon during the war, recalls his experience as a student: "The Ecole Nouvelle Cevenole was, for me, an opening, and determined my future life because the teachers there, and especially the Protestant pastors, gave me a moral and ethical sense of things . . . ."[255]

This emphasis on moral development and character is exemplified by an event that took place in mid-August of 1942. The Vichy government placed great importance on the development of youth of France and even established youth camps modeled after Hitler Youth. In order to win the hearts and minds of French youth, the Vichy government also sent their minister of youth as an ambassador to various regions. In August of 1942 Georges Lamirand, the minister of youth, made a trip to the little village of Le Chambon. He was greeted with a less than enthusiastic reception, which included an official "banquet" of small portions dictated by the official rations set by the government.[256] At the service, a youth leader read Romans 13, which urges respect for government authority when the actions of

---

[254] See Lesley Maber's unpublished memoir, *Bundle of the Living*, André Trocmé and Magda Trocmé Papers, Swarthmore College Peace Collection, Swarthmore, PA.

[255] Quoted in Durland DeSaix and Gray Ruelle, 219.

[256] André Trocmé,"Memories."

those authorities are in line with God's commands.[257] Lamirand tried to make the best of the situation even though he likely realized that winning the souls of the youth of the Plateau would prove to be very difficult. He underestimated this difficulty, however, until a dozen older students from the Cévenol School handed him a letter. In this letter the students openly and forthrightly outlined their disagreement with Vichy policies regarding the Jews and articulated their intention to remain in solidarity with the Jews residing in the village. The letter reads:

> Mr. Minister:
>
> We have learned of the frightening scenes which took place three weeks ago in Paris, where the French police, on orders of the occupying power, arrested in their homes all the Jewish families in Paris to hold them in the Vel d'Hiv. The fathers were torn from their families and sent to Germany. The children torn from their mothers, who underwent the same fate as their husbands. Knowing by experience that the decrees of the occupying power are, with brief delay, imposed on Unoccupied France, where they are presented as spontaneous decisions of the head of the French government, we are afraid that the measures of deportation of the Jews will soon be applied in the Southern Zone.
>
> We feel obligated to tell you that there are among us a certain number of Jews. But, we make no distinction between Jews and non-Jews. It is contrary to the Gospel teaching.
>
> If our comrades, whose only fault is to be born in another religion, received the order to let themselves be deported, or even examined, they would disobey the orders received, and we would try to hide them as best we could.[258]

---

[257] André Trocmé,"Memories."

[258] Quoted in Hallie, *Lest Innocent Blood be Shed*, 102. André Trocmé was likely involved with the writing of this letter. Hallie, *Lest Innocent Blood Be Shed*, 105. See also Patrick Gerard Henry, *We Only Know Men: The Rescue of Jews in France during the Holocaust* (Washington D.C.: The Catholic University Press of America, 2007), 25. After the students read the letter Lamirand is reported to have said, "'These questions are not my affair. Speak to the prefect of your department.'" Hallie, *Lest Innocent Blood Be Shed*, 102. Prefect Bach, who was a member of the official government entourage, took Trocmé aside and warned him to be careful, or else he might be arrested before the Jews. Trocmé, "Memories." Approximately two weeks after Lamirand's visit Vichy officials and police officers came to Le Chambon with empty busses and undertook an official search for Jews. The Chambonnais were prepared for this visit, and many of the refugees fled to the woods, neighboring regions, and other hiding places. The officials stayed in the village for about three weeks, but only arrested two

The letter of protest, delivered to Lamirand by the older students of the school, attests to the reality that the students were not just learning languages and arithmetic, but also learning about compassion, solidarity, and character. These students likely realized that they could face serious, if not fatal, repercussions for putting this letter in the hands of Lamirand, but they were willing to take that risk. As such this letter is a token of the type of education the students received at the school: one that fostered a spirit of solidarity and fortitude of character.[259]

The *École Nouvelle Cévenole* not only instilled moral values into its pupils, it was also a symbol of the community's belief in the sacredness and dignity of human life, including the lives of Jewish refugees. While the Nazis and their allies endeavored to exterminate Jews, the school educated Jewish refugees and thereby expressed a belief in their dignity as persons and their value as members of society. The German regime was trying to create a society free of Jews, yet the school was training refugees to participate constructively in the future of Europe. The *École Nouvelle Cévenole* also employed Jewish refugees who had lost their teaching positions due to increasingly xenophobic legislation. By 1942 Jewish teachers were not permitted to teach in the northern zone of France. In employing teachers who had been dismissed from their positions the school affirmed their worth as contributing members of

---

individuals during this time. One was later released, though the fate of the other is unknown. Hallie, *Lest Innocent Blood Be Shed*, 107-112.

[259] The faculty at the *École Nouvelle Cévenole* also did not enforce the required salute of the flag and likewise refused to hang a picture of Pétain on the wall of the school. See Trocmé,"Memories."

society.[260] Thus, the *Cévenole* school functioned as a center for the formation of character as well as a beacon of hope for the future.

The Family

While the temple and school played an important role in the moral formation of many of the children of the Plateau, the most important milieu for character formation was the family. Even if parents did not talk with children explicitly about moral values, the children witnessed first-hand what it meant to reach out to the stranger in need.[261] They were raised in an environment where caring for the stranger was considered the "natural" thing to do. Philip Hallie explains, "What the children saw was what the rest of the Chambonnais saw: the *necessity* to help that shivering Jew standing there in your door, and the necessity not to betray him or her to harmdoers. In this way of life the children were raised . . . ."[262] The courage and compassion exemplified by the adults of the village not only impacted the refugees arriving at the train station, but also had a great impact on the moral development of the children.[263] The children were raised in a community where compassion and solidarity were the norm.

---

[260] See Christine van der Zanden, "The Plateau of Hospitality," 174 & 183.

[261] Hauerwas and Willimon write, "We witness the courage of ordinary people who find their lives caught up in the purposes of God. The saints enrich rather than constrict our ethics. Epistemologically, there is no substitute for 'saints' – palpable, personal examples of the Christian faith . . . ." *Resident Aliens*, 103.

[262] Hallie, *Lest Innocent Blood Be Shed*, 127.

[263] Of the importance of examples Hauerwas and Willimon write, "So the church can do nothing more 'ethical' than to expose us to significant examples of Christian living. In fact, our ethical reflection, at its best, is usually nothing more than reflection on significant examples." *Resident Aliens*, 97.

Likewise, part of the impetus for making Le Chambon a place of refuge for children came from a sense of concern for both their physical and moral well-being. When Burns Chalmers and André Trocmé met in Marseilles and discussed the initial plans to bring children to Le Chambon, one of the issues they were concerned about was the moral development of children. Hallie explains, "Both men were especially concerned with children. They wanted to give the children of the refugees a strong feeling and a solid knowledge that there were human beings *outside their own family* who cared for them. Only by *showing* them that human beings could help strangers could they give those children hope and a basis for living moral lives of their own."[264] Their desire was that the family units of Le Chambon would give the refugee children a sense of love and hope, and thus contribute to who they were becoming as persons.

Living Into a Story

An exploration of the relationship between character and community on the Plateau Vivarais-Lignon would be incomplete without also readdressing the role of narrative in communal formation. The previous chapter argued for the significance of narrative in the actions of the villagers, but it is critical to recognize that the importance of narrative lies precisely in its relationship to character and community.[265] The narrative of their ancestors was not important in and of itself, though it was an interesting story. Its importance resided in how it shaped the moral and ethical imaginations of those who understood themselves to

---

[264] Hallie, *Lest Innocent Blood Be Shed*, 134.

[265] Regarding the formative power of narratives, see Bryan Stone, *Evangelism after Christendom: The Theology and Practice of Christian Witness* (Grand Rapids: Brazos Press, 2007), 62.

be a part of it. Stanley Hauerwas writes about the connection between narrative and communal formation, "We are 'storied people' because the God that sustains us is a 'storied God' whom we come to know only by having our character formed appropriate to God's character. The formation of such character is not an isolated event but requires the existence of a corresponding society – a 'storied society.'"[266] The people of the Plateau very much lived in a storied society. Of course, theirs was actually a society of multiple and competing stories. While they were undoubtedly shaped by a number of stories, they understood the Judeo-Christian narrative to be the primary story, and endeavored to make themselves a part of this story just as their ancestors had. They were socialized into an alternative reality- one in which the stranger and the enemy were to be loved. The narrative of the community shaped their character in such a way that loving the stranger and the enemy was the natural thing to do.

In some ways the villagers acted as individuals, without an institution guiding their actions and without knowing what their neighbors were doing. Yet it was because they were a part of such a "storied society" that they had the moral and ethical resources to act in the way that they did. In this sense, the people of the Plateau Vivarais-Lignon made their history their own. It was not a history that would be determined by military power or national alliances, but a history determined by the Judeo-Christian narrative and that of their ancestors. Their character was shaped by an alternative story to such a degree that they acted strangely in the eyes of the world. Hauerwas explains, "The growth of character, and our

---

[266] Hauerwas, *The Peaceable Kingdom*, 29.

corresponding ability to claim our actions as our own, is a correlative of our being initiated into a determinative story. For it is only through a narrative which we learn to 'live into' that we acquire the character sufficient to make our history our own."[267] The Judeo-Christian narrative and the stories of their ancestors did shape the character of the Chambonnais to such a degree that they would resist the predominant historical reality and indeed make history their own.

Yet, Trocmé and the others leaders of the village would likely not say that their goal was to make their history their own. Their goal was to be conformed to the character of God. It was the stories of the Judeo-Christian narrative and of their Huguenot foremothers and forefathers that gave them a sense of who God was and what God would want of them in such a situation. Their goal was to be obedient to this God, despite the potential consequences. It was this God that sustained them in their actions and this God to whom they felt accountable. Their goal was to be conformed to the character of God and in doing so become part of God's ongoing story.

[267] Hauerwas, *A Community of Character*, 151.

CHAPTER SIX

NONVIOLENT RESISTANCE

> Tremendous pressure will be put on us to submit passively to a totalitarian ideology. If they do not succeed in subjugating our souls, at least they will want to subjugate our bodies. The duty of Christians is to use the weapons of the Spirit to oppose the violence that they will try to put on our consciences. We appeal to all our brothers in Christ to refuse to cooperate with this violence . . .
>
> Loving, forgiving, and doing good to our adversaries is our duty. Yet we must do this without giving up, and without being cowardly. We shall resist whenever our adversaries demand of us obedience contrary to the orders of the gospel. We shall do so without fear, but also without pride and without hate.
>
> —André Trocmé and Édouard Theis[268]

Introduction

While bombs rained down and cannons roared throughout Europe, the people of the Plateau Vivarais-Lignon also fought a battle, though they did so while remaining committed to the conviction that the Christian life was one of nonviolence. In this chapter I will explore their commitment to nonviolence, specifically examining the theology of the village pastor, André Trocmé, as he is widely regarded as the driving force behind the village's nonviolent resistance. After doing so I will use the nonviolent witness of this village as a case study through which I will engage contemporary theological discussions about faithfulness versus effectiveness, the nature of pacifism, and the role of theological imagination in the witness of the church.

---

[268] André Trocmé and Édouard Theis's sermon of June 23, 1940, from the Magda and André Trocmé Papers, Swarthmore College Library, Peace Collection, quoted in André Trocmé, *Jesus and the Nonviolent Revolution*, ed. Charles E. Moore (Maryknoll, NY: Orbis Books, 2003), xii.

The Development of Trocmé's Commitment to Nonviolence

André Trocmé, was ardently committed to nonviolence and played a pivotal role in fostering this ethos among the residents of the Plateau Vivarais-Lignon. While he became firmly convinced of the idea of Christian pacifism during his seminary years, there were several factors from his early life that contributed to his ultimate conviction that followers of Christ should not take up arms. Trocmé accepted the description of himself as "a violent man conquered by God."[269] But what led to this "violent" man's conviction that the path of Christ was a nonviolent one? In this section I will examine those formative experiences and then explore the nature of Trocmé's theological commitment to nonviolence.

One factor that led the young Trocmé to question conventional understandings of national loyalty was the international nature of his family. His father was the descendent of French Huguenots and his mother was German. As a child, Trocmé spent time in Germany with his relatives and found "his German relatives far warmer and more attractive than the Huguenot kinfolk of his severe French father."[270] In his memoirs he recalls the challenge that having both French and German relatives posed for him during the First World War.[271] In the Introduction to Trocmé's book *Jesus and the Nonviolent Revolution* Charles Moore explains,

---

[269] Hallie, *Lest Innocent Blood Be Shed*: *The Story of the Village of Le Chambon and How Goodness Happened There* (New York: Harper & Row, 1979), 265.

[270] Ibid., 49.

[271] André Trocmé's Memoirs, Swathmore College Peace Collection, quoted in Pierre Boismorand, *Magda et André Trocmé, figures de resistances* (Paris: Le cerf, 2008), 32-33.

> During the First World War, André saw first-hand the horrors and senselessness of that war. At the age of thirteen he simply could not accept that his German cousins, his mother being German, might fight against his own half brothers. The shock of this, along with the senseless death of his mother from a car accident just prior to the war, and his encounter with numerous pacifist theologians after the war, cemented his orientation as a pacifist.[272]

It was not, however, only Trocmé's family of origin that was international in nature: the person he would eventually choose as a spouse, Magda Grilli, was Italian. The international make-up of his family of birth as well as his cross-cultural marriage created in Trocmé a keen awareness of the problem of taking up arms against one's kin.

Another important factor in Trocmé's development was the fact that his mother died in a car accident when he was young, an accident for which he held his father responsible. While this event was undoubtedly traumatic for the young André, it eventually made him keenly aware of the need to forgive the killer. Hallie explains, "Trocmé's first encounter with death was at the same time an encounter with his need to forgive lovingly the 'killer.' In the same event he learned the preciousness of the victim's life and the preciousness of the slayer's life. For the rest of his life – except for one moment in 1939, when he thought of assassinating Hitler – he would eschew the vicious circle of revenge."[273] Thus, the need to forgive his father for the death of his mother created in Trocmé an awareness that forgiveness must be extended to all.

Besides the international nature of his family and the death of his mother, another important event in Trocme's development was his first encounter with a conscientious

---

[272] Charles E. Moore, introduction to *Jesus and the Nonviolent Revolution*, x.

[273] Hallie, *Lest Innocent Blood Be Shed*, 53.

objector.[274] This man went by the name of Kindler. Kindler was a German officer who stayed in the Trocmé household when André was sixteen years old. Peter Dyck gives Kindler credit for planting the seeds of what would later become a full-scale commitment to Christian nonviolence. Dyck writes,

> When he was 16, the idea of pacifism came to him through a German officer staying in his parents' home, who said in effect that he was a CO and was determined never to kill. André was not ready for the nonresistant position yet, but the seed was planted. He allowed himself to be drafted into the army. But the struggle with his conscience became so acute that during an expedition to Morocco to deal with local rebellion, he abandoned his rifle and went unarmed into the desert.[275]

Philip Hallie also highlights the important role Kindler played in Trocmé's commitment to nonviolence. Though Trocmé writes extensively and articulately about Christian nonviolence, Hallie believes that his pacifist convictions were quite simple and followed those of Kindler. Hallie explains:

> In its depths his nonviolence stayed as simple as Kindler's; it was an attitude toward people, not a carefully argued theological position. . . . Years later, he would study theology in Paris and New York, and he would work to develop persuasive arguments for pacifism. But this work would be primarily for the sake of convincing others. In his own mind, nonviolence was completely expressed in words as simple and direct as Kindler's when he said to the boy, 'One must refuse to shoot. Christ taught us to love our enemies. That is His good news, that we should help, not hurt each other, and anything you add to this comes from the Devil!'[276]

---

[274] Boismorand, *Magda et André Trocmé*, 41-42.

[275] Peter Dyck's announcement that "André Trocmé Is Dead" written for the Mennonite News Service, June 18, 1971, André Trocmé and Magda Trocmé Papers. Swarthmore College Peace Collection, Swarthmore, PA.

[276] Hallie, *Lest Innocent Blood Be Shed*, 61. See also Trocmé's Memoirs, 94-97, quoted in Boismorand, *Magda and André Trocmé*, 45.

While Trocmé began to appreciate the idea of nonviolence at a fairly young age, he did choose to fulfill the requirement of service in the French military between 1921 and 1923. Despite his pacifist leanings he explained that he joined the military because he wanted "to test his vocation" and because he wanted "the experience of an ordinary man."[277] Even though he was a soldier, Trocmé struggled with the idea of bearing arms, and even told his superiors that as a theology student he made a promise before God never to kill.[278]

By the time Trocmé entered the pastorate he was firmly convinced that the path of discipleship was a nonviolent one. The following sections will explore these convictions in greater detail. It is, however, important to point out that entering the pastorate did not make it easier for him to live out his pacifist convictions. The Reformed Church, of which he was a part, was not pacifist and his commitment to nonviolence made it more difficult for him to find a position within the church. In 1939 the leaders of the Reformed Church told Trocmé directly that his pacifism was doctrinally erroneous and that they thought it was going to do harm to the church in a time of war. He offered his resignation to his local church, but the church council refused to accept it. Trocmé explains that this made him their pastor "'more than ever.'"[279] His parish vowed to support him if war came and he became a conscientious objector, even though becoming a conscientious objector was illegal at the time.[280]

---

[277] Pierre Boismorand, *Magda et André Trocmé: figures de resistance.*(Paris: Le cerf, 2008), 51.

[278] Ibid., 51-52.

[279] Hallie, *Lest Innocent Blood Be Shed*, 144.

[280] Ibid., 84.

Trocmé's Theology of Nonviolence

Trocmé's commitment to nonviolence was primarily shaped by the Judeo-Christian narrative. It was this narrative that formed his basic assumptions about the world, God, and how humans should relate to one another. The stories and principles of this narrative were central to his ethical commitments. The Judeo-Christian story is precisely what gave him the clarity and imagination to resist the Nazi narrative. For example, in the first sermon he delivered during his pastorate in Le Chambon, Trocmé explained to the congregation, "'No government can force us to kill; one has to find a way to resist Nazism without killing people,' such as by following the biblical command to "Love thy neighbor as thyself," the Sermon on the Mount, the Parable of the Good Samaritan, and the religious principle of, 'one should obey God rather than men.'"[281] The stories and principles of the Judeo-Christian tradition were what empowered him to imagine nonviolent ways of resisting the Nazi story.

While Trocmé was shaped by the entire Judeo-Christian tradition, his commitment to nonviolence was primarily Christological in nature. He advocated nonviolence because of the Christological shape of the story that narrated his life. He believed that through Christ all human life was imbued with divine value. Trocmé writes, "Because of the birth, life, death, and resurrection of Jesus Christ, we know that every birth, every life, and every death matters to God."[282] Through Christ each person has an inherent worth, and recognizing this

---

[281]Quoted in Mordecai Paldiel, *Righteous Among the Nations: Rescuers of Jews During the Holocaust* (Jerusalem: The Jerusalem Publishing House and Yad Vashem, 2007), 490.

[282] Trocmé, *Jesus and the Nonviolent Revolution*, xix.

was central to Trocmé's commitment to nonviolence. He explains, "What is at the heart of Jesus' nonviolent revolution? *A loving respect for our neighbor, the person right before us.*"[283] For him, recognizing the inherent worth of a person is central to the command to love one's neighbor as oneself. Nonviolence is therefore written into the first and second commandments.[284]

Yet, it is not only important that Christ imbued human life with divine value, it is also critical that through Christ's sacrifice on the cross the powers of evil have been overcome. Trocmé explains that it was the evil powers of the world that sent Jesus to the cross, but through his sacrificial death on the cross he put an end to violence.[285] With regard to the powers and principalities of the world Trocmé writes, "As we have seen, Jesus came proclaiming the kingdom of God, inaugurated by a Jubilee. This Jubilee upset both human tradition and religious scruples. Consequently, Jesus' adversaries tried to kill him. They were

---

[283] Trocmé, *Jesus and the Nonviolent Revolution*, 150. See also *Jesus and the Nonviolent Revolution*, 174: "God always saves; he never kills. He places the individual person, whether good or evil, at the center of his history. . . . The object of nonviolence, the fabric of which it is knit, is the individual person, always unique in the sight of God, since the unique Son of God sacrificed his life for this person."

[284] In *The Politics of Repentance* Trocmé explains, "The essence of all the higher religions is summed up in two commandments. The first is *Thou shalt love God*, which means you are to love him who is. You exist, therefore, and you resemble him, for no one can love what is unlike himself. This comes to the same thing as saying that God loves you, or again, that the secret of the universe is that your life has an absolute value. And this is the second commandment: *Thou shalt love thy neighbor as thyself.* That is to say, your neighbor is as real as you are and deserves quite as much consideration. To destroy or to harm his life, that is, his senses, is an offense against the whole creation no less criminal than the destruction of your own life." *The Politics of Repentance*, trans. John Clark (New York: Fellowship Publishing, 1953), 5-6.

[285] This is not to say that Christ went to the cross against his will. Trocmé does not believe this to be the case, as he explains, "Jesus deliberately chose to be crucified." *Jesus and the Nonviolent Revolution*, 107. See also *Jesus and the Nonviolent Revolution*, 173: "Jesus' commitment to nonviolence did not grow out of a pantheistic, optimistic, or utopian view of the world. Instead, it came from a precise evaluation of the terrible power of evil. This became obvious in his act of redemption on the cross, through which God, and God alone, overcame the power of evil by using it for his glory."

determined to prevent a dangerous revolution that would usurp their influence and power."[286]

While it is the evil powers of the world that sent Jesus to the cross, Trocmé also discusses Christ's sacrifice on the cross in light of the figure of the *goel* in the Hebrew Bible. He explains that in the Law of Moses the *goel* is the 'avenger of blood.' Drawing on Numbers 35:19 he writes, "If someone had been murdered, the *goel* had the responsibility of carrying out the vendetta against the guilty person." Trocmé also explains that the *goel* was associated with redemption in that if a kinsman was forced to sell his land because of debt the *goel* would be the one to "'redeem what his countryman has sold"' (Lev. 25:25). Likewise, in Isaiah and the Psalms God becomes the *goel* who ransoms God's people from the Babylonians. In Isaiah 52 and 53, another characteristic of the *goel* appears- the *goel* is the one who takes on the chastisement of God. Trocmé explains that in all these ways the role of Jesus is connected to the Hebrew Bible, as "Jesus believed he was the *goel*, that is, the instrument chosen by God to carry out redemption."[287] Christ thus takes upon himself the laws of retaliation and transmutes them. In this sense, the violence of the cross is the end of all violence. Trocmé writes, "Redemption does not eliminate divine violence, but rather redirects it from the head of God's enemy to the Lord's servant, who is called to suffer on behalf of the guilty. Evil is overcome by redemptive love. God the avenger of his oppressed

---

[286] Trocmé, *Jesus and the Nonviolent Revolution*, 103 & 105.

[287] Ibid., 10-11.

people liberates them by dying for them."[288] Through the cross evil is overcome and becomes submitted to God.[289] The cross ultimately represents the reality that God has overcome violence and evil, both in individual lives and in history.

While Trocmé's commitment to nonviolence was primarily Christological in nature, he did not neglect the connection between Jesus' understanding of nonviolence and the Jewish tradition of which he was a part. He does this not only by connecting Jesus to the *goel* of the Hebrew Bible, but also by situating Jesus within Israel's tradition of resistance against oppression. He explains, "In addition to Israel's prophetic tradition, Jesus inherited a history of national resistance. In fact, from the exile until Jesus' time, Israel's history was one long struggle for the acceptance or rejection of this grand and terrible vocation of Servant of the Lord."[290] Besides situating Jesus in Israel's tradition of national resistance, Trocmé also discusses the relationship between Jesus and the Jewish context of resistance to military service. He explains,

> The practice of the Sabbath and Jewish dietary restrictions could not be reconciled with Roman military life. This forced those Jews who were Roman citizens to plead for exemption from military service, which was eventually granted them by Julius Caesar in 47 B.C. . . . This is probably why Jesus never had to tell his disciples to refuse military service. Even those who might have had Roman citizenship would have been exempted by the imperial edict. All pious Jews were conscientious objectors for ritual reasons.[291]

---

[288] Trocmé, *Jesus and the Nonviolent Revolution*, 74.

[289] Ibid., 11-12.

[290] Ibid., 74.

[291] Ibid., 87-88.

Jesus is firmly located in the Jewish tradition and his commitment to nonviolence therefore cannot be understood apart from it.

Trocmé's Christology of nonviolence is also firmly grounded in the Chalcedonian affirmation that Christ is both fully human and fully divine. Recognizing that Christ was fully human, Trocmé thought that it was possible for his disciples to follow his teachings. Jesus did not embody an unrealizable ethical ideal for Trocmé, but rather he called his disciples to live for the kingdom of God in the here and now. Of the tendency to think of Jesus as an impossible ethical ideal Trocmé explains, "'If Jesus really walked upon this earth, why do we keep treating him as if he were a disembodied, impossibly idealistic ethical theory? If he was a real man, then the Sermon on the Mount was made for people on this earth; and if he existed, God has shown us in flesh and blood what goodness is for flesh-and-blood people.'"[292] Thus, it is because Jesus was fully human that nonviolence is a real possibility for humanity.

Because of his Christology, Trocmé understood the path of discipleship to be one of nonviolence. At one point he did consider becoming involved in an assassination plot against Hitler, but feared that this would separate him from Christ. He writes about this decision,

---

[292] Quoted in Hallie, *Lest Innocent Blood Be Shed*, 68. See also Wells, 92 regarding this issue in contemporary theology and ethics. He explains, "Both Hauerwas and Yoder base Christian ethics on the full humanity and full divinity of Christ. Their response to alternative views is thus that such views do not do full justice to this orthodox doctrine. Because Jesus is fully God, his call to love the enemy and not to resist evil is binding. And because Jesus is fully human, his journey to the cross is not simply an impossible ethical ideal." *Transforming Fate Into Destiny: The Theological Ethics of Stanley Hauerwas* (Eugene, OR: Cascade Books, 1998).

> Should I not make use of my knowledge of German to slip into Hitler's entourage and assassinate him before it is too late, before he plunges the world into a catastrophe without limits? It is because I feared separating myself from Jesus Christ, who refused to use arms to prevent the crime that was being prepared for him, and because of a kind of stubborn perseverance in the growing darkness that I stayed in place; it was also because my ministry in Le Chambon was becoming more and more interesting.[293]

Trocmé's commitment to pacifism was also soteriological in that he believed the enemy had to be given a chance to repent. Killing the enemy permanently closed the door on this opportunity and thus had soteriological implications. Trocmé explains, "Christian nonviolence, on the contrary, grows out of the unique worth of each human being in God's sight. . . . The Christian argues, 'I cannot kill the evildoer. By shortening his earthly life, I am running the risk of taking away an opportunity for him to repent and be reconciled with God.'"[294] To kill the enemy was to keep that person from entering the kingdom of God, and this was contrary to the purposes of Christ. Of Jesus Trocmé explains, "He came with a prophetic message concerned for the good of all and with an eagerness to bring God's kingdom within reach of everybody, even the enemy."[295]

Because violence could separate one from Christ, Trocmé chose the path of nonviolence. Yet, this was not an easy path and he did recognize that ultimately one must be

---

[293] Quoted in Hallie, *Lest Innocent Blood Be Shed*, 265. See also Paldiel, *Righteous Among the Nations*, 490.

[294] Trocmé, *Jesus and the Nonviolent Revolution*, 157. Hallie reiterates this: "The idea of repentance was important to Trocmé; one of his main reasons for advocating and practicing nonviolence was that he wanted people to give their enemies the chance to repent, instead of killing them before they could do so." Hallie, *Lest Innocent Blood Be Shed*, 220. See also Hallie, 168 and 283: "Édouard Theis has taken great pains to show me that he and Trocmé were trying to prevent the Nazis and Vichy from violating the commandment against killing. They were trying to protect the victims, but they were also trying to stop human beings who were hell-bent on becoming victimizers, hell-bent on doing evil."

[295] Trocmé, *Jesus and the Nonviolent Revolution*, 102.

willing to give up his or her own life rather than take the life of the one acting violently. While this was not something one should necessarily seek out, it was a reality and a potential consequence of discipleship. Trocmé explains,

> The cross, not the way of violence, would be the sign of the kingdom of God. It was not meant for the Redeemer alone. Every disciple is a 'cross-bearer.' . . . Elsewhere Jesus claimed to be a 'ransom,' and explained what this would require of his followers . . . . It demands serving others to the point of losing one's life, like the good shepherd in John 10:1-21. And it involves exchanging one's life for the life of a prisoner, like the *goel* of the Old Testament.[296]

The life of discipleship is one of sacrifice, and though one should not seek to give up one's life, this is always a possible consequence of discipleship and a reality for which the disciple must be prepared.

Communal Formation in Nonviolence

But it was not only Trocmé who was committed to nonviolence. Of central importance to this discussion is the reality that the vast majority of the villagers became active in nonviolent resistance. Some scholars, such as Patrick Henry, have pointed out that there must have been some sympathy on the Plateau toward the pacifist position even prior to Trocmé's arrival as the Reformed pastor in 1934. Trocmé had applied to other parishes and been rejected precisely because of his convictions about nonviolence, yet was accepted in Le Chambon even though he was an outspoken pacifist.[297] Annik Flaud, a historian who

---

[296] Trocmé, *Jesus and the Nonviolent Revolution*, 140. Trocmé also explains, "It is not the sacrifice of the body that counts, but the unlimited dedication of our entire being, body and soul, to a cause more important than our life." *Jesus and the Nonviolent Revolution*, 147.

[297] Patrick Henry, *We Only Know Men: The Rescue of Jews in France during the Holocaust* (Washington, D.C.: The Catholic University of America Press, 2007), 36-37.

focuses on the Plateau Vivarais-Lignon, points to several indicators of the region's sympathy toward nonviolence:

> 1) '[T]he War of the Camisards stopped at the zone of influence of the Consistoire de la Montagne which experienced dragonnades and persecutions but never took up arms (it was also forbidden to the participants in the assemblies of the Assemblées du Désert to be armed)'; 2) '[I]n April 1934 (therefore before André Trocmé's arrival) the presbyterial council officially asked the regional synod and the national synod to reconsider the Church's position on conscientious objection', and; 3) '[A]t the same time period, an association was created in Le Chambon-sur-Lignon . . . whose aim was to come to the aid of the families of incarcerated conscientious objectors.'[298]

There was likely therefore, some sense of openness to the nonviolent position prior to Trocmé's installation as the Reformed pastor. Over the course of the war the vast majority of villagers became involved in resisting the policies of the Third Reich, and did so nonviolently. This raises the question of the role of community in shaping one's convictions and the reality through which one imagines the world. Hallie writes about the Chambonnais commitment to nonviolence, "Following their consciences meant refusing to hate or kill any human being. And in this lies their deepest difference from the other aspects of World War II. Human life was too precious to them to be taken for any reason, glorious and vast though that reason might be. Their consciences told them to save as many lives as they could, even if doing this meant endangering the lives of all the villagers; and they obeyed their consciences."[299] Hallie's quotation points to the distinctive nature of the villagers'

---

[298] E-mails from Annik Flaud to Patrick Henry, September 8, 2003; November 20, 2003; November 24, 2003 quoted in *We Only Know Men*, 37.

[299] Hallie, *Lest Innocent Blood Be Shed*, 10.

convictions and the way those distinctive convictions helped them imagine nonviolent alternatives to the Nazi narrative.

Trocmé keenly understood the importance of community in witnessing to the nonviolent reign of God. He saw the church as carrying on the Jewish notion of being a chosen people. It is in the context of the people of God that true nonviolence can be practiced. Thus, nonviolence is not a principle as such, but an embodied communal reality. Trocmé explains, "Jesus' nonviolence finds its roots in the Jewish notion of a chosen people with a mission among the nations. Nonviolence is not a moral ideal but the fruition of God's plan of redemption in history *through a people*. . . . Through Jesus Christ the church has inherited Israel's vocation as the Servant of the Lord. As such, the church can count on God alone for its defense."[300]

Similarly Trocmé critiques the idea that conscientious objection is the vocation of a few.[301] He sees nonviolence as the vocation of the entire church, as a body. It is not an option that some choose and others do not, but a reality to which all Christians are called. He explains,

> So, without even mentioning love toward non-Christians, which is required no less in witness to the divine sacrifice, the entire Church cannot but abide in a mutual love that excludes anger, hate and murder, and hence participation in wars that lead Christians to kill one another. The order 'love one another' is irreconcilable with 'kill

---

[300] Trocmé, *Jesus and the Nonviolent Revolution*, 172.

[301] Trocmé, *The Politics of Repentance* 96-97. See also Trocmé, *Jesus and the Nonviolent Revolution* 158: "Through redemption, nonviolence thrusts itself on all Jesus' disciples. It becomes an article of faith, a mark of obedience, a sign of the kingdom to come."

> one another.' It cannot be a question here of a particular vocation. It is a question of the whole Church continuing the ministry of Jesus on earth.[302]

It is as a body, not as individuals, that Christians are called to witness to the nonviolent reign of God.

On the Plateau Vivarais-Lignon, nonviolence was an embodied reality and formation in nonviolence took place in community. One of the central places the parishioners discussed nonviolent resistance was in the small formation groups of the parish. These groups were largely comprised of young members of the community and were central to the rescue efforts of the village. The members not only spent time discerning the scriptures together, but also discerned together how to best put the scriptures into practice. Hallie writes, "Through the biweekly meetings in the temple with Trocmé and the weekly meetings with each of the *responsables*, nonviolent resistance in Le Chambon developed its basic theory and its practical applications."[303] Of these meetings with the responsables Trocmé explains, "'It was there, not elsewhere, that we received from God solutions to complex problems, problems we had to solve in order to shelter and to hide the Jews. . . . Nonviolence was not a theory superimposed upon reality; it was an itinerary that we explored day after day in communal prayer and in obedience to the commands of the Spirit.'"[304] In was in community that the Chambonnais discerned how the Spirit was leading them to respond creatively and nonviolently to what seemed like a hopeless situation.

---

[302] Trocmé, *The Politics of Repentance* 98.

[303] Hallie, *Lest Innocent Blood Be Shed*, 173.

[304] Quoted in Hallie, *Lest Innocent Blood Be Shed*, 173.

Active Pacifism

One of the most common arguments against pacifism is that given the reality of genocide, concentration camps, and dictators like Hitler, something has to be done to protect the victims. While this is undoubtedly true, the village of Le Chambon stands out as an example that in some contexts those who are committed to nonviolence can still take an active role in helping the victims and preventing future atrocities. Indeed, Trocmé himself disliked the term pacifism because the term suggested passivity or retreat.[305] Yet, the villagers of Le Chambon certainly did not act passively or retreat from responsibility.[306] Lesley Maber, a teacher at the Ecole Nouvelle Cévenol, writes about Trocmé and Theis, "There was nothing passive about their pacifism: it was a part of the struggle of good against evil, of light against darkness, of love against hate."[307] Likewise, they were not naïve about evil, as

---

[305] Hallie, *Lest Innocent Blood Be Shed*, 33. Trocmé also addresses this in *The Politics of Repentance* in his definition of a conscientious objector as one "who gives his life to save others and at the same time refuses to kill others, friends or enemies" (16). It is also important to note that after the outbreak of the war Édouard Théis and André Trocmé tried to enlist with the International Red Cross, because their pacifist convictions prohibited them from enlisting in the military, but their applications were refused. See Édouard Théis's article about "André Trocmé" in *Reconciliation* (1976): 28, André Trocmé and Magda Trocmé Papers, Swarthmore College Peace Collection, Swarthmore, PA.

[306] In his unpublished "Memories" Trocmé does acknowledge that the village was somewhat protected by the armed resistance movement in the surrounding area. He struggles with the dilemma of being a "pacifist" while members of the armed resistance movement were protecting the area and sometimes losing their lives in the process. He writes, "We were nonviolent but it seems sometimes that others were violent in our place, permitting us to carry on our charity work under their protection and they sometimes killed Germans and were killed by them." André Trocmé and Magda Trocmé Papers, Swarthmore College Peace Collection, Swarthmore, PA.

[307] See Lesley Maber's unpublished account of the rescue activities that occurred in Le Chambon in "Bundle of the Living," André Trocmé and Magda Trocmé Papers, Swarthmore College Peace Collection, Swarthmore, PA.

they were keenly aware of the evil that would befall their guests if they did not take action.[308] They were also keenly aware of the evil that might come to their entire community if their actions were discovered.

André Trocmé's form of nonviolence was not for the cowardly. The villagers of Le Chambon acted with great courage as they put their lives on the line day in and day out for the sake of their guests. Theirs was an active form of nonviolence, which averted the temptations toward coercion or withdrawal. Trocmé writes about this type of pacifism, "People tend to think of nonviolence as a choice between using force and doing nothing. But for Jesus, the real choice takes place at another level. Nonviolence is less a matter of 'not killing' and more a matter of showing compassion, or saving and redeeming, of being a healing community. One must choose between doing good to the person placed in one's path, or the evil which one might be doing by mere abstention."[309] Thus nonviolence involves active engagement with the powers of evil. Followers of this path do not allow evil simply to destroy its victims but actively intervene, putting their own lives on the line if necessary.[310] While very few members of the community actually lost their lives, and only Trocmé, Theis, and Darcissac spent time in prison, almost everyone was keenly aware of the

---

[308] See Trocmé, *Jesus and the Nonviolent Revolution*, 160: "Christians must remember that evil is no illusion. Evil cannot be eliminated by inner discipline alone or by silent demonstrations."

[309]Ibid., 146. Trocmé further explains, "The Christian objector to war or military service is thus not a purist who, on the day he receives orders to kill his neighbor, wakes from his dream to say no. He is a servant with experienced hands, who is so busy helping his neighbor that to interrupt his activity to undertake the task of killing is unthinkable to him." Ibid., 152.

[310] Trocmé writes, "If living nonviolently amounts to passivity, it may even encourage evil. But the majority is wrong if it accuses pacifists of wanting to keep their hands clean. Nonviolence engages evil, it does not withdraw from it." Ibid., 153.

potential repercussions for providing such radical hospitality and was willing to face those consequences.

This is not to say that Trocmé or the villagers were careless about their actions. They did take risks, but were not reckless when they did so. Indeed, Trocmé even went into hiding for ten months after finding out that there was a price on his head. He was torn about this decision, wondering "how he would explain to God his running away from the forces of evil – God, who had permitted Jesus to be crucified by those forces."[311] Yet, he realized that he and possibly his family would be killed if he did not go into hiding, so after much internal struggle he chose to do so.

Faithfulness versus Effectiveness

While the villagers of Le Chambon were very concerned for the safety of their guests, they did not follow the path of nonviolence because they thought it was the most effective path. In their case, it would not have been effective for them to take up arms against the Nazi officials or the Vichy regime. This would have certainly led to the destruction of the village. But the issue of effectiveness was not first and foremost on their minds. Rather, they understood the path of nonviolence to be the most faithful way to follow Jesus. It was faithfulness to their understanding of the Christian story rather than

[311] Hallie, *Lest Innocent Blood Be Shed*, 222. Trocmé explains that the decision to go into hiding was difficult. He was warned by members of the French Resistance that the Gestapo was planning to execute him. He knew such executions often involved bandits entering a home during dinner and slaughtering the entire family. He struggled with the reality that in staying a home he might be endangering the lives of his children, yet he still desired remain in his house. He reports that church authorities, however, persuaded him to go into hiding. See Trocmé's unpublished "Memories."

effectiveness that was at the heart of their commitment. Trocmé writes of this sense of faithfulness, "The church is not to preoccupy itself with results. It has not even to practice 'pacifism,' that is, reject arms with the object of stopping war. No, God expects only one thing of it: that it walk in obedience to the gospel, refusing violence in whatever form because of that obedience, without concerning itself with the consequences, good or bad, that such a refusal may involve."[312] While the villagers undoubtedly hoped their actions would bring about good results, Trocmé reminded them that this should not be their primary concern, and that they must be willing to face the consequences that resulted from their obedience to the gospel.[313]

Another parable that illustrates Trocmé's ideas about faithfulness versus effectiveness is a story about a church built with snow that he shared with the children who attended the Christmas service at the parish. In this story a schoolmaster asks his students to create a surprise for him during their holiday break. The youngest students build a church out of snow, the middle students become jealous of the church and build a palace, and the oldest students get even more jealous and decide to build a fort. Eventually the oldest students start a war with the middle students. The youngest students initially try not to get involved, and simply sing hymns in their church, but eventually come to the conclusion that

---

[312] Trocmé, *Jesus and the Nonviolent Revolution*, 169. Trocmé also explains, "The difference between the total darkness of an unlighted house, and the light shed by a single lamp is the difference between night and day. . . . We need not worry about the effectiveness of our preaching or of our example of nonresistance and gentleness. Our voice, if we would but speak, our example, if we would but put love into practice, is not lost in the night" (169).

[313] Of this idea Hauerwas and Willimon write, "For the church to set the principle of being the church above other principles is not to thumb our noses at results. It is trusting God to give us the rules, which are based on what God is doing in the world to bring about God's good results." Stanley Hauerwas and William H. Willimon, *Resident Aliens: Life in the Christian Colony* (Nashville: Abingdon Press, 1989), 46.

they should try to do something to stop the war. The oldest students destroy the church built by the young students, as well as the palace built by the middle students. Then a rain comes and destroys everything, so when the schoolmaster returns the students have absolutely nothing to show him. The students go before the master and he looks at the places where the fort, castle, and church formerly stood. Where the fort was there is nothing – "Nothing but nothingness." Where the palace stood there is only a swamp of melting snow. Then the schoolmaster examines the place where the church stood. To the youngest students he says, "'Your eyes . . . are full of sadness and shame. You built a church, but it was a church made only of snow. Nothing of it is left today. You tried to stop the battle, and you didn't succeed. Go and see the place where your church stood!' The Little Ones went out to the site of their church. And next to the puddle that had been their church, they found a little bit of grass, already turning green. It was the first announcement of Spring."[314] This story illustrates Trocmé's conviction that the ultimate task of the church is to be obedient to the gospel, regardless of the results. This means trying to intervene for peace, recognizing that one might not always be successful in doing so. In this children's story the church is destroyed, but in its place there are signs of new life.

The story of Le Chambon raises another issue with regard to the question of faithfulness and effectiveness, and that is how results are to be measured. With over 60 million lives lost during World War II, the idea that violence was an effective response to violence could certainly be called into question. But the story of Le Chambon raises the

---

[314] André Trocmé, *Angels and Donkeys: Tales for Christmas and Other Times*, trans. Nelly Trocmé Hewett (Intercourse, PA: Good Books, 1998), 75-88.

question of effectiveness on another level as well. In the big picture of the war, what occurred in Le Chambon did not appear to have great significance. Yet, it did have significance for those whose lives were saved, and certainly has enduring significance as a story that continues to inspire Christians. At the time of their rescue activities, the villagers were probably not thinking about how the wider world would react to their actions. They likely did not imagine that one day many thousands of people would have heard their story. But this story of courage, resistance, and faithfulness has become known throughout the globe, and thus has an enduring legacy. The behavior of the Chambonnais may not have appeared "effective" at the time, but in the bigger picture their actions have provided a paradigm of faithfulness for many Christians. While their actions may not have produced extensive and immediate results, their story continues to be told and thus brings about unknown and immeasurable results. The story of Le Chambon thus calls for a reevaluation of how effectiveness is measured and a recognition that it cannot always be calculated in traditional ways.[315]

Trocmé believes that Christians are called to be faithful rather than dwell on the results of their actions because he believes that this is the path of discipleship. Jesus himself was not effective in the eyes of the world. His life was one of faithful service to God,

---

[315] John Howard Yoder writes, "The key to the obedience of God's people is not their effectiveness but their patience ([Rev.] 13:10). The triumph of the right is assured not by the might that comes to the aid of the right, which is of course the justification of the use of violence and other kinds of power in every human conflict; the triumph of the right, although it is assured, is sure because of the power of the resurrection and not because of any calculation of causes and effects, nor because of the inherently greater strength of the good guys. The relationship between the obedience of God's people and the triumph of God's cause is not a relationship of cause and effect but one of cross and resurrection." *The Politics of Jesus* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1972), 238.

regardless of the consequences. In comparing Jesus to Gandhi, Trocmé writes, "From a human standpoint, Jesus failed. Moreover, his aim was not the same as Gandhi's. His goal was never merely the national liberation of Israel. He wanted to prepare, then inaugurate the kingdom of God on earth. His nonviolence was not a means to reach this end, but rather a matter of obedience and witness to God, who is love and who alone will establish his kingdom on earth."[316] While Trocmé has great respect for Gandhi, he goes on to explain the ways in which Jesus and Gandhi were different, and points to the implications this has for disciples of Christ. He argues, "To claim that Jesus in the Sermon on the Mount was proposing a Gandhian-type 'chess game,' however, is to distort his message. Jesus certainly did not give up the possibility of changing his enemies' hearts, but the motive for his nonviolence is elsewhere, namely in God himself . . . . To be 'sons of the Most High' (Luke 6:35), we must be loving, and therefore nonviolent, without hoping to necessarily overcome or overpower anybody."[317] Thus Trocmé makes an important distinction between a type of nonviolence used as a political strategy and a nonviolence that results from obedience to God, which he believes is best exemplified by Jesus. He recognizes that sometimes it will appear that Christian nonviolence is a failure, and only God can prove otherwise. It is not a political strategy as such, but a lifestyle of obedient witness. Trocmé explains,

> Jesus stated, 'Blessed are those who are persecuted because of righteousness,' without promising any earthly successes other than the final coming of God's kingdom. . . . This self-denial to which Jesus referred is not the ascetic discipline

---

[316] Trocmé, *Jesus and the Nonviolent Revolution*, 155.

[317] Ibid., 156. Trocmé's portrayal of Gandhi's nonviolence could be called into question for overstating the degree to which it was a political strategy and understating its religious nature.

> Gandhi prescribed for his disciples to prepare them for nonviolent combat, but something far deeper. It is a preparation for the possible failure of their attempts and for physical death, when the enemy will think he is the victor. God alone will change the cross into victory.[318]

Theological Imagination

The witness of the people of the Plateau Vivarais-Lignon also challenges a deeper cultural assumption about the effectiveness of violence in overcoming violence. While something must undoubtedly be done to challenge the power of the Hitlers of the world, the idea that violence is the only reliable or adequate response to evil, and that evil is overcome by violence, is a predominant belief that the story of Le Chambon calls into question. Of the leaders of the village Hallie writes, "for them the killing that had created this great victory over murder and humiliation was itself evil."[319] Trocmé also examines the problematic nature of the idea that violence overcomes violence. In his book *Jesus and the Nonviolent Revolution* he writes, "We have seen how Jesus proclaimed a unique revolution. Unlike his contemporaries he refused to resist evil on its own terms. His kingdom was not of this world, yet it was for

---

[318] Trocmé, *Jesus and the Nonviolent Revolution*, 156.

[319] Hallie, *Lest Innocent Blood Be Shed*, 34.

this world."[320] Trocmé understands Jesus to have put an end to the idea that a person can be saved by violence.[321]

In calling into question the idea that the only way to overcome violence is with violence, the village of Le Chambon points to the role of imagination in developing alternatives to violence.[322] The Chambonnais ability to identify these alternatives and develop creative solutions to bring them about was largely motivated by Trocmé's understanding of how Jesus responded to violence. "Jesus' revolution would bypass political intrigue and posturing; it would follow an altogether different path."[323] It was not that Jesus was not tempted to use violence- he was. But he overcame this temptation.[324] It was also not that he

---

[320] Trocmé, *Jesus and the Nonviolent Revolution*, 117. Similarly Trocmé writes, "Perhaps it is true that certain violent remedies employed against tyrants have put an end to certain forms of evil, but they have not eliminated evil. Evil itself will take root elsewhere, as we have seen through history. The fertilizer that stimulates its growth is yesterday's violence." *Jesus and the Nonviolent Revolution*, 152.

[321] Trocmé explains, "By choosing to save at the cost of his life, Jesus forever joined two realities: redemption and nonviolence. Because Jesus is the Redeemer, no one can any longer save by killing or kill to save. Life alone, life given, not life exacted from others, can save life." Ibid., 148.

[322] Hauerwas writes, "From my perspective far from requiring a withdrawal from the political arena, pacifism demands strenuous political engagement because such a commitment forces us to expand our social and political imaginations." Stanley Hauerwas, "Why the 'Sectarian Temptation' is a Misrepresentation: A Response to James Gustafson" in *The Hauerwas Reader*, ed. John Berkman and Michael Cartwright (Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 2001), 105. See also Bryan Stone, *Evangelism after Christendom: The Theology and Practice of Christian Witness* (Grand Rapids: Brazos Press, 2007), 71: "And so it is that to live within the social imaginary of shalom – to worship God and thus to be able to see anew, to obey God and thus to be led down new paths – is to live in such a way that the resort to violence is no longer an option."

[323] Trocmé, *Jesus and the Nonviolent Revolution*, 71.

[324] Ibid., 103-104. Of this Trocmé also writes, "The temptation to use violence accompanied Jesus right to his death. . . . It was only after an intense inner struggle, after the genuine moral agony at Gethsemane, that Jesus finally rejected resorting to violence" (106-107).

was not tempted to withdraw. Trocmé believes this was a real temptation for him as well.[325] "Jesus stood between – and, in the end, beyond – the options of violence or withdrawal, fight or flight. As tempting as these options were, he chose another way."[326] In this sense Jesus pointed to a third way[327]- a way beyond the traditional dichotomy between withdrawal and violence- a way that called for active engagement, courage, and imagination. Trocmé explains, "Jesus carved a new path into the hardness of human realities, a path he trod first . . . ."[328] Because of the path that Christ first trod, a new reality opened up in world history.

Because he believed Christ had shown an alternative way, Trocmé thought traditional arguments for Christian participation in warfare were faulty, and thus challenged traditional conceptions of Christian responsibility. He explains, "Jesus' message is skewed whenever it is argued that as a Christian one should not bear arms, but that as a citizen of the state one is nevertheless obligated to participate in the armed defense of the common

---

[325] Trocmé explains, "If Jesus was faced with the temptation to use violence, it is also true that at certain points he was tempted to give up all public activity, retire to the desert, and form a community of the faithful, separate from the world." Trocmé, *Jesus and the Nonviolent Revolution*, 108.

[326] Ibid., 112.

[327] The idea of a "third way" is also developed by Walter Wink. See, for example Walter Wink, *Jesus and Nonviolence: A Third Way* (Minneapolis: Augsburg Fortress, 2003).

[328] Trocmé explains, "Jesus was no theorist of nonviolence. He overcame violence by a succession of day-to-day decisions and a series of redemptive acts. On every occasion, he freely chose the road of nonviolence rather than that of armed resistance. Jesus' refusal to use force was therefore not some extra-historical dream of a mystic trying to forget the concrete realities of the world. He did not ignore the human condition. . . . Jesus carved a new path into the hardness of human realities, a path he trod first, carrying on his shoulders the way of the cross and all the requirements of the kingdom of God: social justice, radical transformation, commitment to truth, and personal regeneration. These are the materials with which he builds the kingdom of God." *Jesus and the Nonviolent Revolution*, 107. See also *Jesus and the Nonviolent Revolution*, 142: "Reformers at every historical turning point seem forced to choose the 'lesser of two evils' – war or resignation. Jesus, however, would find a third way and thus eliminate this merciless false dilemma for all his disciples."

good."[329] Understanding this is to be a false dichotomy, Trocmé believed Jesus opened up a new way of existing in the world. Christians do not live into the reality that Jesus taught because they lack the theological imagination to believe that reality to be the true one. Instead they are trapped in the belief that the borders defined by nation-states are real, and that violence puts an end to violence. Of this Trocmé writes, "Why then do today's Christians hesitate to put Jesus' love-command into practice? The reason is that Christians, especially in the West, participate in the power structure. Their ethic is one of 'realism.' It is one of compromise with honors, power, money, and war, and they cannot free themselves from it."[330]

With regard to the question of violence, Jesus chose an alternative way, and that was the way of the cross.[331] He understands the cross as breaking the cycle of violence, and opening up a new reality for the world.[332] Trocmé writes, "Jesus rejected the way of violence. He overcame his enemies without using the methods common to the kingdoms of this world. His way would be the cross. And yet this way was not one of passive resignation or of avoiding conflict. To inaugurate his triumph as a peaceable king, he entered Jerusalem, the

---

[329] Trocmé, *Jesus and the Nonviolent Revolution*, 112. Trocmé also critiques the nationalism of the church as he writes, "So, equally sincere believers continue to slaughter each other on the battlefields, convinced that they are acting in accordance with the purposes of God, who mysteriously includes holocausts among the methods he adopts for the accomplishment of his holy will." *The Politics of Repentance*, 12.

[330] Trocmé, *Jesus and the Nonviolent Revolution*, 159.

[331] Ibid., 145: "Jesus' entire career was a succession of redemptive acts such as the one at Capernaum, and they all led to the cross. This is Jesus' third way: a nonviolent love that commits itself to the redemption of the individual person."

[332] Trocmé writes, "God's forgiveness creates the possibility of an entirely new future. The cross breaks the cycle of violence. The sacrifice of Jesus opens an unexpected way to possibilities that are constantly renewed." Ibid., 152.

heart of humanity's anguish and longing. And he did so free from the temptations of coercion and withdrawal."[333] Thus Jesus avoids the two most common paths for responding to violence: accepting coercion as necessary, or withdrawing from conflict entirely. Jesus enters fully into human suffering, and in doing so opens up new possibilities for engaging conflict in a nonviolent way. Trocmé explains that Jesus chose a "third path" between the standard paths of war or withdrawal. Of this path Trocmé writes, "It would appear he was faced with only two options: war . . . or withdrawal from the world . . . . Jesus, however, chose a third path: the nonviolent entry as Messiah into Jerusalem, his capital city. More than a 'triumphal entry,' Jesus' nonviolent option was packed with redemptive significance. His sacrifice would be the supreme mark of divine compassion."[334]

As Christ's body, the church is the bearer of a nonviolent vision for the world. This alternative politics is represented in a disagreement Trocmé had with members of the Maquisards over the use of communion cups and plates. The Maquisards were a group of people who stationed themselves on the fringes of Le Chambon and the neighboring villages and chose to take up arms against the Germans. One day members of the Maquisard asked Trocmé if they could borrow the church's communion cups and plates so that they could have a service in the woods. Trocmé refused saying, "I am sorry, but this is impossible. Get cups and plates like the ones you need from private parties. How can you reconcile

---

[333] Trocmé, *Jesus and the Nonviolent Revolution*, 114.

[334] Ibid., 139.

Communion with the desire to kill Germans?"[335] For Trocmé the Eucharist, the communal memory of Christ's sacrifice and resurrection, was completely irreconcilable with violence. In memory of Christ, the church was to embody an alternative political reality. Doing so meant actively struggling on behalf of the victims, recognizing that faithfulness was more important than effectiveness, and learning to imagine the world through the lens of God's shalom.[336]

[335] Hallie, *Lest Innocent Blood Be Shed*, 184.

[336] Trocmé's commitment to nonviolence led him to imagine alternative ways that Christians could respond to violent situations. He not only grappled with these issues on a theoretical level, but tried to engage alternatives to violence on a practical level as well. Certainly this was true during his pastorate in Le Chambon, and this commitment continued throughout his life. After the war Trocmé became increasingly involved in the Fellowship of Reconciliation, a faith-based group committed to nonviolent conflict resolution, taking on the role of the European Secretary from 1948-1960. He and Magda also moved to Algeria in 1956 in order to study the conflict there and work for nonviolent solutions to this conflict. While in Algeria Trocmé became aware of the predicament of French resisters who refused service in the French army. He was deeply disturbed about this situation, which led him to work with the Mennonites in order to develop Eirene, a service program for development workers and conscientious objectors. Magda and André were also both involved in working against atomic weapons and the formation of an international peace center in Versailles called the House of Reconciliation. These activities are some of the many ways that Trocmé tried to imagine, and then create, real alternatives to violence.

CHAPTER SEVEN

RADICAL HOSPITALITY

It is in the shelter of each other that the people live.

—Irish Proverb[337]

What is hospitality? Whom should I invite into my community and into my home? What is my ethical obligation in relation to the suffering stranger? Perhaps more than any other event in modern history, the Shoah has forced us to ask what it means to be responsible for each other: what it means to welcome the other. One could argue that the Holocaust was precisely the antithesis of Christian hospitality: an absolute and complete rejection of the stranger. Not only were Jews not welcomed into Gentile homes and communities, they were not welcomed on the Earth.

In relation to this historical context, this chapter will analyze the concept of hospitality using the village of Le Chambon as a springboard. After first examining the form and nature of hospitality extended on the Plateau-Vivarais-Lignon, this chapter will explore the meaning of hospitality in scripture as well as various periods of church history. In conversation with several theologians this chapter will then seek to evaluate what contemporary Christians can glean from this group of French villagers and farmers who practiced hospitality with extraordinary courage and conviction.

---

[337] An Irish proverb quoted in Mary Pipher, *The Shelter of Each Other: Rebuilding Our Families* (New York: Ballantine Books, 1996).

The First Open Door

Magda Trocmé wanted to help the woman who knocked on her door during the winter of 1940-1941. She decided the first thing she needed to do was get papers for the woman so that if she was stopped she would not be deported back to Germany and went to the mayor's office confident that he would help her with this task. To her surprise and disappointment instead of helping her he reprimanded her for taking the woman into her home. The mayor told Magda that in doing so she was threatening the safety of the entire community, and ordered her to get the woman out of the village, if not that evening, at least by the following day. Magda was not sure what to do, but she worried that now that the mayor knew about the woman's presence he might feel forced to turn her in if she did not figure out a way to get her out of the village. Magda decided to arrange for the woman to stay with a Catholic family nearby. While this particular woman did not end up living with the Trocmés, her arrival marked the beginning of Le Chambon's commitment to sheltering refugees. Magda and the other villagers began to realize that closing one's door was not only refusing to help, but actually an act of doing harm.[338]

A Living Tradition of Welcome

The tradition of hospitality on the Plateau began, however, long before Magda Trocmé was born and has continued after her death. For example, even today Le Chambon continues to welcome refugees, functioning as an official center for those seeking political

---

[338] Philip Hallie, *Lest Innocent Blood Be Shed: The Story of the Village of Le Chambon and How Goodness Happened There* (New York: Harper & Row, 1979), 119-24.

asylum in France. While waiting to gain their status as political asylees, adults take French language classes and children attend the schools in the village.[339] Le Chambon is best known for the courageous hospitality the villagers demonstrated during World War II, but it is important to recognize this was not an isolated phenomenon and that the practice of welcoming refugees and those in need continues even to this day. As discussed previously, this contemporary expression of hospitality has deep roots on the Plateau, roots that extend back several centuries.

The Nature of Hospitality on the Plateau

In addition to the history of hospitality on the Plateau it is also important to examine the nature of the hospitality that the villagers and farmers extended to their guests. This is much more difficult to describe and assess, as each individual's experience was certainly unique to the family atmosphere or boarding home where they resided. Certainly not all experiences were positive and some former refugees have attested to the difficulty of their living situations. Likewise, even if the family atmosphere was warm and welcoming, the children often struggled with the extraordinary emotional trauma of not knowing where their parents were or if they would see their parents again. No matter how loving or welcoming a host family acted, there was little that could compensate for the devastating and traumatic situations in which the children found themselves.

---

[339] Deborah Durland DeSaix and Karen Gray Ruelle, *Hidden on the Mountain: Stories of Children Sheltered from the Nazis in Le Chambon* (New York: Holyday House, 2007), 240.

In any case, the majority of former refugees seem to remember their hosts in a positive way. For example, Elisabeth Koenig, who lived with the Trocmé family for a period before becoming the director of one of the children's homes explains, "'What I can't emphasize enough was how they accepted us. After all that we had been through, nobody asked who was Jewish and who was not. Nobody asked where you were from. Nobody asked who your father was or if you could pay. They just accepted us as individuals, taking us in with warmth, sheltering children, often without their parents – children who cried in the night from nightmares.'"[340] Elisabeth Koenig's testimony highlights the real trauma many of the children faced but also the warmth and acceptance demonstrated by many of their caregivers.

Another important aspect of the hospitality extended on the Plateau was the respect most of the residents demonstrated toward the religious beliefs of their guests. Though it was generally too dangerous to organize public religious services, many Jewish children were able to maintain some degree of religious observance while living on the Plateau. On a few occasions holiday services were even organized in some of the group homes. Some refugees did attend Christian worship services, but this attendance was almost always voluntary, and generally done in an effort to bolster their false identities. On occasion, however, only readings from the Hebrew Bible were used in the Protestant services so the Jewish refugees

[340] Quoted in Ken Ringle, "Trail to Le Chambon: World War II Survivor Elizabeth Koenig's Remarkable Journey," *The Washington Post*, January 19, 1990.

in the congregation could attend and not feel they were betraying their faith.[341] The Chambonnais apparently showed respect for the religiosity of their guests and did not attempt to proselytize. According to one author, Trocmé even forbade Jewish children from converting to Christianity without the permission of their parents. Most children living on the Plateau were separated from their parents and he felt that it would be devastating for parents to be reunited with their children after having faced such persecution for their religious beliefs only to find out that their children had converted to Christianity.[342]

Because You Were Strangers

Having given a brief overview of the history and nature of hospitality on the Plateau this chapter will now trace the practice of hospitality back even further, exploring the idea of hospitality in the Hebrew Bible and New Testament. The biblical narrative was central to the identity of many of the Chambonnais and it is therefore important to explore some key biblical ideas about welcoming the stranger in need.

The people of Israel knew what it meant to be sojourners and strangers. God continually called the Israelites to remember their own experience as slaves and aliens, and as they reflected on their experience they were to practice hospitality and justice toward the stranger, the vulnerable, and the marginalized. This theme appears throughout the Hebrew Bible and is explicitly stated in Exodus 23:9: "You shall not oppress a resident alien; you know the heart of an alien, for you were aliens in the land of Egypt" (NRSV). The passage

---

[341] Patrick Henry, *We Only Know Men: The Rescue of Jews in France During the Holocaust* (Washington, D.C.: The Catholic University of America Press, 2007), 38.

[342] Hallie, *Lest Innocent Blood Be Shed*, 54.

calls the Hebrew people to remember from the heart the difficulty of their experience and to act with justice. Deuteronomy 10:19 is also a critical passage regarding the treatment of strangers. It reads, "You shall also love the stranger, for you were strangers in the land of Egypt" (NRSV). Again, this passage calls the Israelites to remember their own experience and to act with compassion toward those in similar situations. Further, the biblical command to love one's neighbor as oneself is applied to the "alien" in Leviticus. Leviticus 19:33-34 explains, "When an alien resides with you in your land, you shall not oppress the alien. The alien who resides with you shall be to you as the citizen among you; you shall love the alien as yourself, for you were aliens in the land of Egypt: I am the LORD your God" (NRSV). The communal identity of the Israelites was therefore shaped by their experience of slavery, their story of sojourn, and their experience of deliverance. Again and again they are called to remember this history as part of their covenant with God. Because of this memory they were to treat the stranger justly, compassionately, and with love. Hospitality was written into the covenant and therefore central to what it meant for the Israelites to be the people of God.

Likewise, parts of the Hebrew narrative attest that in entertaining strangers one actually might be entertaining angels, divine messengers, or perhaps even God. For example, three visitors come to Abraham and Sarah with the good (and seemingly laughable) news that Sarah will bear a child. Genesis 18:1-2 explains, "The LORD appeared to Abraham by the oaks of Mamre, as he sat at the entrance of his tent in the heat of the day. He looked up and saw three men standing near him. When he saw them, he ran from the tent entrance to meet them, and bowed down to the ground" (NRSV). Abraham extends hospitality to his divine guests by bringing water for them to wash their feet and providing them with a

substantial meal. The guests bring good news that Sarah will bear a son and reiterate God's promise that the descendants of Abraham will become a great nation. This story, which was central to the Hebrew narrative, was likely what inspired the writer of Hebrews to exhort his readers: "Do not neglect to show hospitality to strangers, for by doing that some have entertained angels without knowing it" (NRSV). The idea that in taking care of strangers one might be taking care of an angel or of the divine is echoed throughout the New Testament, and will be explored in the next section.

Just As You Did It to the Least of These

The practice of hospitality is important in the New Testament. The words used for hospitality in the New Testament are *xenia* and *philoxenia*. The term *philoxenia*, when broken down, has two component parts – *love* and *stranger*. Therefore, *philoxenia* literally means "love of stranger."[343] This section will seek to explore precisely how strangers are to be loved according to the New Testament.

The way hospitality is understood in the New Testament is very different from popular conceptions of hospitality. Andrew Arterbury explains, "Today we think of hospitality as the custom of feeding family, friends, and neighbors in our homes or hosting these people for a night or two. The writers of the New Testament, however, were working with a significantly different definition of hospitality or *xenia*. The ancient custom of hospitality revolved around the practice of welcoming strangers or travelers into one's home

[343] Michele Hershberger, *A Christian View of Hospitality: Expecting Surprises* (Scottdale, PA: Herald Press, 1999), 19-20.

while promising them with provisions and protection."[344] Amy Oden also writes about this sense of hospitality as she explains, "While hospitality can include acts of welcoming family and friends, its meaning within the Christian biblical and historical traditions has focused on receiving the alien and extending one's resources to them."[345] Hospitality in the New Testament is therefore not simply welcoming Great Aunt Sally to visit for the day, but being willing to welcome the unknown traveler, and with this welcome to provide food, clothing if needed, and sometimes even protection.

According to the New Testament Jesus himself both relied upon and embodied hospitality. From his time in the womb through the end of his life he allowed himself to be vulnerable and dependent on others. In his birth he and his parents were reliant upon the hospitality of strangers. The Incarnation itself, the central doctrine of the Christian faith, expresses the character of a God who makes Godself vulnerable, entering fully into human existence in its most helpless state – as an infant.

While Christ's life demonstrates the vulnerability of God, this is not a God who receives a consistent welcome from the world. From his birth in a manger, to his rejection in his hometown, to his death at the hands of Roman authorities, this God who enters fully into the human condition is not always received with open arms. Yet Christ made himself

---

[344] Andrew Arterbury "Entertaining Angels: Hospitality in Luke and Acts," *Christian Reflection: A Series in Faith and Ethics* (2007): 20, under "Hospitality," http://www.baylor.edu/content/services/document.php/53378.pdf (accessed June 28, 2010).

[345] Amy G. Oden, ed., *And You Welcomed Me: A Sourcebook on Hospitality in Early Christianity* (Nashville: Abingdon Press, 2001), 14

vulnerable over and over again, relying on the hospitality of others throughout his life and ministry.

Christ not only relied upon hospitality, but embodied hospitality in its truest and most profound sense. As Christ welcomed children, the lame, and sinners he demonstrated the depth of God's welcome, and God's particularly warm reception to those who are rejected or looked down upon by society. He did not command his followers to practice the hospitality of freshly ironed sheets and proper place settings, but instead to welcome those most degraded and rejected by society, those who would likely not know which fork was for salad and which fork was for the main course. Christ's hospitality was not that of Martha Stewart, and was not tit for tat. He did not welcome others because he knew they would return the favor, nor did he extend invitations out of social obligation. Rather the type of hospitality he practiced challenged the very system of social obligation. Dining with tax-collectors, prostitutes, and sinners he turned traditional practices of hospitality on their head. He challenged conventional social boundaries designating who was in and who was out. At God's banquet all are welcome, and those who are not welcomed in most proper households are precisely the ones with whom Christ chose to dine. In this he embodied what Donald Kraybill has described as the "upside-down" nature of God's kingdom.[346]

Christ lived a life of radical hospitality and also instructed his followers to do so. For example, according to Luke 10, Christ commissioned seventy to go ahead of him into

[346] Donald Kraybill, *The Upside-Down Kingdom* (Scottdale, PA: Herald Press, 1971).

various villages and towns. While there they were to rely upon the hospitality of others. To those he sent out he explained:

> Whatever house you enter, first say, 'Peace to this house!' And if anyone is there who shares in peace, your peace will rest on that person; but if not, it will return to you. Remain in the same house, eating and drinking whatever they provide, for the laborer deserves to be paid. Do not move about from house to house. Whenever you enter a town and its people welcome you, eat what is set before you; cure the sick who are there, and say to them, 'The kingdom of God has come near to you.' (NRSV)

Christ's disciples were to heal the sick and to preach the nearness of the kingdom of God, and while doing so they were to rely upon the hospitality of strangers.

Christ also warned his followers that he may show up in the form of an unexpected guest. He is the one who might need a cup of water, a coat, or a place to lay his head. Just as the Israelites were called to recognize their own experience in the experience of the stranger, so are Christians called to recognize Christ in the stranger in need. The most classic expression of this idea is recorded in Matthew 25 in the story of the Last Judgment. Although this passage is very familiar to most Christians, it is worth citing since it speaks directly to the topic of Christian hospitality:

> When the Son of Man comes in his glory, and all the angels with him, then he will sit on the throne of his glory. All the nations will be gathered before him, and he will separate people one from another as a shepherd separates the sheep from the goats, and he will put the sheep at his right hand and the goats at the left. Then the king will say to those at his right hand, "Come, you that are blessed by my Father, inherit the kingdom prepared for you from the foundation of the world; for I was hungry and you gave me food, I was thirsty and you gave me something to drink, I was a stranger and you welcomed me, I was naked and you gave me clothing, I was sick and you took care of me, I was in prison and you visited me." Then the righteous will answer him, "Lord, when was it that we saw you hungry and gave you food, or thirsty and gave you something to drink? And when was it that we saw you a stranger and welcomed you, or naked and gave you clothing? And when was it that we saw you sick or in prison and visited you? And the king will answer them, "Truly I tell

> you, just as you did it to one of the least of these who are members of my family, you did it to me." (NRSV)

Providing food, something to drink, offering clothing if needed, and inviting the stranger in are all classical expressions of hospitality. One does not usually categorize visiting the sick and prisoners under the auspices of hospitality, but in essence these are also expressions of the same concept. The sick and prisoners are, however, usually confined to particular place or area, and hospitality must be brought to them.

Whether hospitality is extended in one's home, by visiting someone in their home, or by visiting them elsewhere, this parable tells us that hospitality is directly related to conduct characteristic of the kingdom of God. Jesus' mission and message were about the kingdom of God, and his life testified to the form and substance of that Kingdom. Throughout his life and ministry he embodied welcome and in doing so invited all he came into contact with to life in the kingdom of God.

The Constantinian Shift

While the practice of hospitality is a biblical imperative and was central to the witness of the early church, the nature of Christian hospitality shifted somewhat when the emperor Constantine came to power. Prior to Constantine the church understood itself as a minority movement. In writing about this period Amy Oden explains, "Contested or displaced identity marked much of Christian life in the Roman Empire. Early Christians talk about Christian identity in terms of the stranger, the sojourner, or the foreigner. Christians of the first three centuries certainly understood themselves to be aliens, pilgrims in this world with

citizenship in another."[347] This had direct implications for the practice of hospitality. Oden goes on, "Christians' sense of cultural alienation was often expressed through identification with exiles and refugees. Because Christians were at times under threat from civil authorities, the act of harboring refugees who were brothers and sisters in Christ became imperative."[348]

However, as Christianity changed from a minority movement into the religion of the empire, the nature of Christian hospitality changed. Christine Pohl traces this shift and explains that Christian hospitality after Constantine began to reflect the social patterns and societal norms of the empire. She writes,

> After the church ceased being a persecuted sect and was embraced by earthly powers, Christians moved into influential public positions. During that time, the social carriers of hospitality, persons within the Christian communities who acted as hosts, moved from the margins of institutions into more central institutional locations. As Christians became more established in positions of influence and wealth, their marginal status was diminished and their hospitality was more likely to reflect and reinforce social distinctions than to undermine them.[349]

Hospitality that undermines social distinctions and reflects the upside-down nature of God's kingdom is thus related to another theme that has been explored in this dissertation – ecclesial distinctiveness. The early Christians tended to think of themselves as aliens in society, and this alien status helped them to be more receptive to others. However, once Christianity became the religion of the empire this pattern shifted and practices of hospitality often reinforced prevalent cultural patterns rather than challenging those patterns.

---

[347] Oden, *And You Welcomed Me*, 36.

[348] Ibid., 38.

[349] Christine D. Pohl, *Making Room: Recovering Hospitality as a Christian Tradition* (Grand Rapids: William B. Eerdmans Publishing Company, 1999), 113

John Calvin and the Shared Image of God

Thus far I have traced ideas about hospitality through the biblical narrative and the early church. This section will explore hospitality in relation to the Huguenot narrative. My first dialogue partner will be the founding father of this narrative – John Calvin. While it is unlikely that most of the villagers were familiar with John Calvin's specific teachings about hospitality, those teachings certainly shaped the Huguenot story and are therefore pertinent to this study.

John Calvin himself experienced displacement at various points in his life and knew what it meant to be a refugee. He was forced out of Paris and dismissed from Geneva, and through these experiences gained an understanding of the life of displacement. He also ministered to a church of refugees for three years, and some scholars argue that his doctrine of election cannot be understood apart from the church's experience of diaspora.[350] Heiko Oberman explains that the doctrine of predestination was meant to give reassurance to those who were experiencing persecution and displacement. He writes, "Rather than providing grounds for arrogance, predestination offers all true Christians the hope that even under extreme duress they will persevere to the end."[351] One gains a glimpse of this connection in Calvin's own statement that "We have no other place of refuge than his providence."[352]

---

[350]Heiko Oberman, *The Two Reformations: The Journey from the Last Days to the New World*, ed. Donald Weinstein (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2003), 150.

[351] Ibid., 115. Oberman explains, "Predestination is an excellent example of a teaching which, however well and extensively documented with precise quotations, cannot be grasped unless one has an eye for its social and psychological roots. This apparently abstract doctrine was a matter of existential faith for the

Calvin's experience of displacement and his ministry to others who had become refugees because of their faith fostered in Calvin a sense of empathy for strangers in need. For Calvin, the imperative of caring for the stranger was grounded in the reality that the stranger was created in the image of God. It was by appealing to creation in the image of God as well as to the common humanity of all persons that Calvin made his case for Christian hospitality.[353] In the *Institutes of the Christian Religion* Calvin writes:

> Therefore, whatever man you meet who needs your aid, you have no reason to refuse to help him. Say, 'He is a stranger'; but the Lord has given him a mark that ought to be familiar to you, by virtue of the fact that he forbids you to despise your own flesh (Isa. 58:7, Vg.) Say, 'He is contemptible and worthless'; but the Lord shows him to be one to whom he has deigned to give the beauty of his image. Say that you owe nothing for any service of his; but God, as it were, has put him in his own place in order that you may recognize toward him the many and great benefits with which God has bound you to himself. Say that he does not deserve even your least effort for his sake; but the image of God, which recommends him to you, is worthy of your giving yourself and all your possessions.[354]

Because all humans are created in the image of God, Christians must care for the stranger in need, even if that stranger is "contemptible." Likewise, because all humans have the same flesh Christians cannot refuse to aid their neighbors.

---

exiles who, far from home, in a language arising from their experience of banishment, 'traveled through the wilderness.' Even as they went 'behind the pillar of fire,' they clung to the providential guidance of God." *The Two Reformations*, 118.

[352] Quoted in Oberman, *The Two Reformations*, 150.

[353] Christine Pohl summarizes Calvin's position this way in her book *Making Room*, 65.

[354] Calvin, *Institutes of the Christian Religion*, 2 vols., ed. John T. McNeill (Philadelphia: Westminster Press, 1960), 3.7.6.

In addition to appealing to the common nature of humanity, Calvin takes his argument a step further and explains that denying one's neighbor in need is actually denying one's own humanity. He writes:

> We should not regard what a man is and what he deserves: but we should go higher – that it is God who has placed us in the world for such a purpose that we be united and joined together. He has impressed his image in us and has given us a common nature, which should incite us to providing one for another. The man who wishes to exempt himself from providing for his neighbors should deface himself and declare that he no longer wishes to be a man, for as long as we are human creatures we must contemplate as in a mirror our face in those who are poor, despised, exhausted, who groan under their burdens.[355]

It is because we recognize our common human nature that we are to give aid to those who carry heavy burdens; to turn away from this responsibility is to forsake one's own humanity. If one denies the neighbor in need, one not only dehumanizes that person, one also dehumanizes oneself. Those who do not extend the hand of hospitality therefore cut themselves off from what it means to be truly human.

Calvin certainly argues that we should extend a hand of aid to the poor, exhausted, and those who carry heavy burdens, but he also makes clear that we must recognize our common humanity with those who are despised by society, and even with "barbarians." In making this point he writes, "If there come some Moor or barbarian, since he is a man, he brings a mirror in which we are able to contemplate that he is our brother and our neighbor:

---

[355] John Calvin, *Corpus Reformatorum: Joannis Calvini Opera Quae Supersunt Omnia*, ed. Guilielmus Baum, Eduardus Cunitz, and Eduardus Reuss (Brunswick: C. A. Schwetschke et Filium, 1863-1897), vol. 51, column 105, quoted in John H. Leith, *John Calvin's Doctrine of the Christian Life* (Louisville: Westminster/John Knox Press, 1989), 186.

for we cannot abolish the order of nature which God has established as inviolable."[356] Thus our compassion should not be limited to those for whom we naturally feel empathy, but must extend to those who are very different from us, because in reality they are not that different.

Calvin's theological convictions regarding compassion for the needy are also grounded in his understanding of the term "neighbor." He believes that Christ's teachings about loving one's neighbor have a universal connotation. In response to the question of "Who is my neighbor?" Calvin explains that "Christ has shown in the parable of the Samaritan that the term 'neighbor' includes even the most remote person (Luke 10:36)." Therefore, "we are not expected to limit the precept of love to those in close relationships."[357] Compassion, aid, and hospitality are not things that we only extend to family members or close friends. A person whom we do not know who is along the side of the road and is in need certainly deserves compassion and hospitality.

While it is unlikely that the villagers and farmers of the Plateau were familiar with Calvin's specific teachings about compassion for strangers, they did illustrate those teachings in their conduct. While society at large labeled the Jews as "contemptible and worthless," the Chambonnais recognized their common humanity. Calvin also instructs his readers to recognize themselves in the faces of those in need. Because of their ancestors' experience of persecution and exile the Chambonnais were able to do what Calvin instructed (albeit

---

[356] John Calvin, *Corpus Reformatorum*, quoted in Leith, 186.

[357] John Calvin, *Institutes of the Christian Religion*, 2 vols., ed. John T. McNeill (Philadelphia: Westminster Press, 1960), 2.8.54.

perhaps without knowing they were doing this) and see their own reflection in the faces of those who came to their doors seeking shelter. Just as Calvin recognized the universal significance of the term "neighbor," so did the Chambonnais realize that caring for their neighbors meant opening their doors to those who sought shelter in their neighborhood.

Subversive Hospitality

In contrast to prevailing social etiquette, Jesus instructs his followers: "When you give a luncheon or a dinner, do not invite your friends or your brothers or your relatives or rich neighbors, in case they may invite you in return, and you would be repaid. But when you give a banquet, invite the poor, the crippled, the lame, and the blind. And you will be blessed because they cannot repay you, for you will be repaid at the resurrection of the righteous" (Luke 4:12-14 NRSV). In common parlance hospitality does mean inviting one's friends, relatives, and neighbors over for dinner- friends, relatives, and neighbors who will likely invite one over in return. In today's social protocol, perfect appetizers and matching napkin rings are part of what defines hospitality, according to most magazines. One puts out one's best dinnerware and invites friends who are likely from the same socio-economic status and part of the same ethnic group. This is not, however, the kind of hospitality depicted in scripture, nor is it the kind of hospitality practiced by the people of Le Chambon. Writing about the practice of hospitality in the early church, Christine Pohl explains, "Especially in relation to strangers, hospitality was a basic category for dealing with the importance of transcending social differences and breaking social boundaries that excluded certain categories of kinds of persons. Hospitality provided a context for recognizing the worth of

persons who seemed to have little when assessed by worldly standards."[358] Amy Oden echoes this theme in her discussion of early Christian hospitality as she writes, "An important component of hospitality is helping the outsider or the poor feel welcome, which at times requires more than food and drink – a recasting of social relations."[359] Breaking down social barriers and recasting social relationships is therefore at the heart of Christian hospitality. The practice of hospitality as depicted in scripture and as practiced by the people of Le Chambon did recast social relations and therefore actually undermined and subverted the sort of hospitality sold by magazines in the check-out line at the grocery store. It points to an alternative value system in which those who are disregarded by society and have no means of reciprocating are the first ones invited to the dinner table.

In continuing this theme, Christine Pohl explains, "Although we often think of hospitality as a tame and pleasant practice, Christian hospitality has always had a subversive, countercultural dimension. . . . Especially when the larger society disregards or dishonors certain persons, small acts of respect and welcome are potent far beyond themselves. They point to a different system of valuing and an alternate model of relationships."[360] This was certainly true of the hospitality practiced on the Plateau. The hospitality extended there was quite radical and practiced at great risk to the hosts. It was certainly subversive and countercultural in that it was not just frowned upon but was illegal – with the potential

---

[358] Pohl, *Making Room*, 62.

[359] Oden, *And You Welcomed Me*, 14.

[360] Pohl, *Making Room*, 61.

penalty of death for such acts. Simple acts of welcome fundamentally challenged the Nazi ideology concerning who could interact with whom. The hospitality extended on the Plateau very much pointed to an alternative value system and an "alternate model of relationships."

In practicing such radical hospitality the people of the Plateau bore witness to a different social order. This order was structured according to the values and norms of the kingdom of God. In welcoming those marginalized and persecuted by the wider society, the people of Le Chambon challenged the predominant ideology and called that ideology to account. The nature of the hospitality extended on the Plateau was a criticism of the political and social ideologies of the time. It called those who held these ideologies to be accountable to the values of the kingdom rather than the values of the nation-state. Christine Pohl writes,

> Because the practice of hospitality is so significant in establishing and reinforcing social relationships and moral bonds, we notice its more subversive character only when socially undervalued persons are welcomed. In contrast to a more tame hospitality that welcomes persons already well situated in a community, hospitality that welcomes 'the least' and recognizes their equal value can be an act of resistance and defiance, a challenge to the values and expectations of the larger community.[361]

Hospitality thus challenges idolatrous worldviews. Amy Oden discusses the way welcoming the other confronts idolatry in her book, *And You Welcomed Me*. She explains, "Hospitality shifts the frame of reference from self to other to relationship. This shift invariably leads to repentance, for one sees the degree to which one's own view has become the only view. . . . When we realize how we have inflated our own frame of reference and imposed it on all of reality, we know we have committed the sin of idolatry, of taking our

---

[361] Pohl, *Making Room*, 62.

own particular part and making it the whole."[362] It could certainly be argued that the Nazi worldview was one of idolatry – of taking their "own particular part and making it the whole." Hospitality, or truly getting to know the other, can act as a preventative measure against this type of idolatry and the devastating social ramifications of such worldviews.

It is important, however, to recognize that even though Christian hospitality is about radical welcome, there are also boundaries, and without those boundaries hospitality would cease to exist. The core of Christian hospitality involves welcoming the other in the spirit of God's reign, as exemplified by Christ. Such hospitality therefore challenges practices that are contrary to that reign. For example, when André Trocmé was about to be arrested and imprisoned Magda Trocmé invited the arresting officers to stay and have dinner with the family. She did not do this because she was tired of her husband and endorsed his arrest, she did it out of a spirit of Christian hospitality. One of the arresting officers could not eat his dinner and was almost in tears. The hospitality that was extended to him created in him a sense of conviction and challenged his complicity in arresting the pastor. This is one example of how Christian hospitality challenges practices that go against the reign of God. Such hospitality is even to be extended to one's enemy, but it is not apathetic about the actions of those who are welcomed. Caroline Westerhoff explains, "In our increasingly pluralistic society, our words and practices of inclusion often reflect sentimental, sloppy thinking. To say everyone is included in our family of faith is to confuse *inclusion* with *welcome*. To welcome is to receive with pleasure, to delight in another's being among us for a time, to

[362] Oden, *And You Welcomed Me*, 15.

be hospitable." She goes on to argue, "A boundary is a line drawn that defines and establishes identity. It provides essential limits, for what is not limited, bounded, merges with its context and ceases to exist in its own particular way."[363] The hospitality of the Chambonnais was based on their distinctive identity. If they had lost this identity, and neglected the boundaries that defined their community, they would not have been able to practice such radical hospitality. Christian hospitality is therefore not simply inclusion, but is a summons toward the hospitality of God's reign and as such challenges all that goes against that reign.

This type of hospitality has political consequences. Hospitality is often thought of as something that takes place in the private realm. It is about inviting a person into one's home, into one's private space. But hospitality, if it is practiced according to the values of the kingdom, is not something that can be relegated to the private realm. Radical hospitality, such as that practiced by the Chambonnais, is in fact public and political. Elizabeth Newman picks up this theme in her book *Untamed Hospitality: Welcoming God and Other Strangers*. She writes, "Christian hospitality is not a private effort separate from politics and economics. It is rather a practice at once *ecclesial* and *public*, embodying a politics, economics, and ethics at odds with dominant cultural assumptions."[364] The hospitality extended by the Chambonnais fits this description well. In welcoming refugees the Chambonnais embodied a politics at

---

[363] Caroline A. Westerhoff, "Boundary and Hospitality," *Christian Reflection: A Series in Faith and Ethics* (2007): 84-85, 88, under "Hospitality," http://www.baylor.edu/content/services/document.php/53385.pdf (accessed June 28, 2010).

[364] Elizabeth Newman, *Untamed Hospitality: Welcoming God and Other Strangers* (Grand Rapids: Brazos Press, 2007), 14.

odds with the political ideology that made refugees. In opening their doors they embodied an economics of abundance, even though food was scarce. Likewise, they created an ethical community that was certainly at odds with the predominant cultural norms. Through such actions the Chambonnais demonstrated the very public and political nature of Christian hospitality.

Inviting someone into one's home and giving them a meal might not seem very consequential in relation to world politics. History books about World War II tell the stories of nation-states, not farmers on a plateau. However, while giving someone a place to stay or something to drink may not seem significant, when such actions are done in the Spirit of Christ they hold great significance. Elizabeth Newman explains, "Hospitality is a practice and discipline that asks us to do what in the world's eyes might seem inconsequential but from the perspective of the gospel is a manifestation of God's kingdom."[365] The actions of the villagers and farmers of Le Chambon and the surrounding area were manifestations of God's kingdom. They might not have seemed significant at the time, but the significance of God's kingdom is ultimate, while the significance of nation-states is temporal. Likewise their actions held great significance for those who came to their doors and the story of the community continues to have significance as it is passed on from generation to generation.

Hospitality that transcends social boundaries and welcomes the "least of these" is therefore incredibly significant as it offers a vision of what could be, what should be, rather than what is. It points to a restored world where relationships are defined by Christ. Such

---

[365] Newman, *Untamed Hospitality*, 174.

hospitality offers a foretaste of relationships in the kingdom of God, a foretaste of what God intends for the world. Of this type of hospitality Pohl explains, "Sometimes, by the very acting out of welcome, a vision for a whole society is offered, a small evidence that transformed relations are possible."[366]

This vision for the whole of society often emerges on the margins. While most citizens and countries closed their doors to the Jews, the small village of Le Chambon opened them widely. Part of their commitment to extend hospitality stemmed from their awareness that many of their ancestors had come to the region seeking refuge. It was because of this distinctive identity that, when strangers knocked, many of them replied, "Yes, come in." In her book *Making Room*, Christine Pohl points to the connection between marginality and hospitality. She writes, "Most gracious hosts are, in some way, marginal to the larger society, but they are not alone. . . . Transforming hospitality still finds its most effective location on the edges of society, where it is offered by hosts who have a sense of their own alien status."[367] Writing centuries before Pohl, Augustine also draws connections between hospitality and the distinctive identity of Christians. In a sermon he instructs his parishioners, "Acknowledge the duty of hospitality, for by this some have attained unto God. You take in some stranger, whose companion in the way you yourself also are, for we are all strangers. This person is a Christian who, even in his own house and in his own

---

[366] Pohl, *Making Room*, 64.

[367] Ibid., 124.

country, acknowledges himself to be a stranger. For our country is above, there we shall not be strangers."[368]

André Trocmé explores the connection between hospitality and marginality in one of his children's sermons, "The Rich Man and the Poor Man." He contrasts the actions of a rich man and a poor man who are awaiting the Messiah. Mary and Joseph first seek shelter at the rich man's house, but the rates for overnight accommodations at his luxurious home are steep, and they cannot afford a room so he sends them away. After trying all the other homes in the village they knock at the poor man's door, and he welcomes them in even though his living conditions are meager and he only has a manger for a cradle. Both the rich man and the poor man are waiting expectantly for the Messiah and are shocked when the wise men show up to give gifts to the newborn baby sleeping in the manger at the home of the poor man. The poor man, who lived on the margins of the town and was ashamed to invite people into his home, was ultimately the one who acted hospitably, and the one who got to see the Messiah.[369] At the heart of Trocmé's story is the idea that transformational hospitality often takes places on the margins.

Most Christians have probably not had such experiences of marginality. Does this mean they are unable to practice true hospitality? Similarly, if one is displaced, persecuted, or homeless, how does one offer hospitality? Being without a home precludes welcoming

---

[368] Augustine, "Sermon 61," in *Homilies on the Gospels*, trans. R. G. MacMullen in *Nicene and Post-Nicene Fathers of the Christian Church*, ed. Philip Schaff, 1st ser. (New York: The Christian Literature Company, 1887), VI: 446.

[369] André Trocmé, *Angels and Donkeys: Tales for Christmas and Other Times*, trans. Nelly Trocmé Hewett (Intercourse, PA: Good Books, 1998), 9-15.

someone into one's home (though it does not preclude other forms of welcome). In reality, however, it is not a question of actual physical displacement or marginality, but a question of one's identity and where that identity is located. If one's identity is located in the kingdom of God this will result in a sense of displacement, even if one is not displaced in a physical sense. Elizabeth Newman picks up this theme as she writes, "The reality is that Christians (and Jews) are 'homeless' or 'displaced' only in a sense. We are displaced from locating our identity in our nation, our family, or our position in society, in order to locate it more fully before God."[370] The location of one's identity in the reign of God is therefore what is most critical to one's ability to extend true hospitality. It allows one to discern false loyalties and truly see the face of God in the other.

[370] Newman, *Untamed Hospitality*, 114.

CHAPTER EIGHT

THE WITNESS OF THE CHURCH

> Don't you know that we live in a foreign land, as though strangers and sojourners? Don't you know that it is the lot of sojourners to be ejected when they don't think they will be, when they least expect it? This is also our lot . . . but seeing we are by nature sojourners, let us also be so by choice; that we be not there [with God] sojourners and dishonored and cast out. For if we are set upon being citizens here, we shall be so neither here nor there; but if we continue to be sojourners, and live in such wise as sojourners ought to live in, we shall enjoy the freedom of citizens both here and there.
>
> —John Chrysostom[371]

From 1940 to 1944 the people of the Plateau Vivarais-Lignon were wrapped up in the day-to-day tasks of caring for their families and their guests. Their thoughts and actions revolved around trying to put food on the table. They were not reflecting on the "political" nature of their actions or about what the wider world would think about their radical hospitality. Warm clothing, daily bread, and safety were much more pressing concerns. Yet, their actions have had an enduring legacy. More than half a century later tourists continue to visit the remote village to learn about the "goodness that happened there."[372] Books have been written, and movies produced. Their story continues to be told and continues to instruct the consciences of those who hear it. Their witness endures.

The nature of this witness will be explored with particular focus on its ecclesiological character. The distinctive nature of this community will be analyzed, as well as the role of

---

[371] Quoted Amy G. Oden, ed., *And You Welcomed Me: A Sourcebook on Hospitality in Early Christianity* (Nashville: Abingdon Press, 2001), 39.

[372] This phrase is taken from the subtitle of Philip Hallie's book *Lest Innocent Blood Be Shed: The Story of Le Chambon and How Goodness Happened There* (New York: Harper & Row, 1979).

theological vision in shaping its ethics. After examining the distinctive nature of this community's theological vision, the witness of Le Chambon will be considered in light of the model of the church as an "embassy of the Reign of God."

Distinctive Nature

The distinctive nature of the community on the Plateau Vivarais-Lignon played a central role in its mission and ministry. The Chambonnais were distinct because of their religious history and identity.[373] Their Huguenot ancestry provided them with a critical lens through which they interpreted reality in a particular way.[374] Their religious identity and understanding of persecution enabled them to see the world differently than most of European society.[375] In the fog of war they had a clarity of vision that compelled them to come to the aid of those who were being unjustly persecuted.[376]

---

[373] Hallie writes, "In the south of France, people called the village the 'republic of Le Chambon' because somehow it managed to remain a world of its own, an impregnable fortress in a murderous world, a place that could not be made a party to the compromises and murders of the France around it." *Lest Innocent Blood Be Shed*, 30.

[374] Of the significance of perception Bryan Stone writes, "One of the most important functions of narrative in any practical theology is the cultivation of our skills in 'seeing.'" *Evangelism after Christendom: The Theology and Practice of Christian* Witness (Grand Rapids: Brazos Press, 2007), 41.

[375] John Howard Yoder explains, "A community, to use the newer fad language of the sociology of knowledge, is *an alternative construction of the world*. . . . It teaches us another way to respond to reality than the way that other world teaches us to perceive reality. It aids our perception; because we are in this alternative community we see things other people don't see, we notice things they don't notice, we make connections they haven't seen." *For the Nations: Essays Public and Evangelical* (Grand Rapids: William B. Eerdmans, 1997), 153.

[376] Hallie, *Lest Innocent Blood Be Shed*, 104.

The ability of Le Chambon to be a community of resistance was due largely to their physical and religious separation from the wider society.[377] As Susan Zuccotti points out, Protestants who were more assimilated into French society did not have the same attitudes and behaviors as those exemplified by the Chambonnais. The Chambonnais were a particular people. Their physical separation from the rest of French society is part of what contributed to this distinctive ethos, though their distinctiveness also had theological underpinnings. (The remote physical location of Le Chambon certainly contributed to the distinctive identity of the people. Because most Christian communities are not located in such isolated settings questions of applicability can be raised.)

André Trocmé points out the importance of particularity. He writes, "Following in Israel's footsteps, the church also understands itself as divinely chosen." This is not election based on the righteousness of the elect, but election grounded in God's grace. Jesus shared this belief in Israel's election and envisioned "the birth of a 'remnant,' of a 'small flock,' to which the Father would give the kingdom and to which the nations would be drawn."[378] Trocmé explains that the idea of election is often watered down because it causes tension between Christians and those of other faiths. Yet, he argues, "Every time the church doubts its election, every time it plays down the 'scandal of particularity,' its capacity to witness is

---

[377] This was true on both theological and practical levels. In this section I will point out the theological importance of ecclesial "distinctiveness" in the story of Le Chambon. However, their "separateness" from the wider society was significant on a practical level as well. If they had lived in a dispersed fashion in a larger city the chances that they would have been caught would have greatly increased.

[378] André Trocmé, *Jesus and the Nonviolent Revolution*, ed. Charles E. Moore (Maryknoll, NY: Orbis Books, 2003), 6.

diminished."[379] Thus Trocmé is critically aware of the importance of theological and ecclesiological particularity. While it is a scandal in the eyes of the wider world, Trocmé recognizes it as essential to the witness of the church. Certainly the particularity of the people of the Plateau was "scandalous" at the time in that they did not abide by the social norms and laws of the land. Yet their scandalous particularity is a large part of what enabled them to witness to an alternative reality, and therefore a significant reason their witness continues to remain relevant.[380]

In relation to the topic of theological distinctiveness, Trocmé laments the conversion of Constantine, as this event triggered the loss of the church's particularity. He explains, "Once in power, the church adopted Rome's social ethic as its own."[381] The church lost its ability to witness to anything different, and confused Rome's social norms with ecclesial norms. Yet, it is precisely the particularly of the church that allows it to have a distinctive social ethic, and thus to have something to say to the wider world. In picking up on the theme of the Constantinianization of the church, Trocmé makes an argument akin to the thought of John Howard Yoder. Like Trocmé, Yoder bemoans the implications Constantine's conversion had for the church. He explains the Constantinianization of the

---

[379] Trocmé writes, "But let us return to Israel's election. It is the result of a divine choice as inexplicable as love, because Israel is 'the least of the nations.'" *Jesus and the Nonviolent Revolution*, 6.

[380] Stone explains, "Ironically, it may be that it is precisely from a position of marginality that the church is best able to announce peace and to bear witness to God's peaceable reign in such a way as to invite others to take seriously the subversive implications of that reign. It may be that through humility, repentance, and disavowal of its former advantages, so that those thing that were once 'gains' to the church now come to be regarded as 'loss' (Phil. 3:7), a church at the periphery *of* the world may yet be a church *for* the world." *Evangelism after Christendom*, 11.

[381] Trocmé, *Jesus and the Nonviolent Revolution*, 65.

church as the fusion of the church and the world. With Constantine, the church baptized the state, but did not require the state to change.[382] Both Trocmé and Yoder therefore see the conversion of Constantine as the critical period when the church gave up its distinctive social and ethical values and in doing so lost its ability to witness to the wider society.

Instead of being co-opted by Constantine, Trocmé argues, the church should have continued to be the "light of the world." It is the world's "salt." The church stands as a witness to the world, calling the world to a higher law. The church is like the world's conscience, and if the church loses its saltiness it becomes "responsible for the corruption of the world." Therefore, "The church must never give allegiance to the state, even if the state protects it, but must constantly call the state to a more perfect justice."[383] Thus the church is not to withdraw from social and political affairs but as the conscience of the world is to call society to a higher form of justice.[384] It is precisely its distinctive salt-like nature that allows it to do so. Losing its saltiness does not just lead to bland liturgy: a lack of salt leads to its decay and corruption in the wider world.

Trocmé and Yoder both believe that the church's responsibility to the world is to be the church: to be a people.[385] God is at work precisely in the formation of a people and it is

---

[382] John Howard Yoder, *The Royal Priesthood: Essays Ecclesiological and Ecumenical*, ed. Michael G. Cartwright (Scottdale, PA: Herald Press, 1998), 57-58. Trocmé, *Jesus and the Nonviolent Revolution*, 65.

[383] Trocmé, *Jesus and the Nonviolent Revolution*, 166-167.

[384] Yoder makes a similar point as he writes, "The church is called to live, and is beginning to live (to the extent to which we get the point), in the way to which the whole world is called." *For the Nations*, 46.

[385] Hauerwas and Willimon take a similar position as they write, "This church knows that its most credible form of witness (and most 'effective' thing it can do for the world) is the actual creation of a living, breathing, visible community of faith." *Resident Aliens*, 47.

through this people that God's will for the world is communicated. Yoder explains that without a distinctive "people," the gospel becomes unintelligible and meaningless.[386] Christian witness must always be an embodied witness.[387] In this sense the formation of an alternative community is primary: it is through the life of the gathered community that the wider world can see and understand the values of the gospel.[388] This was undoubtedly true on the Plateau Vivarais-Lignon: through the witness of the community the wider world could see the values of the gospel in action. Through their communal life the people of the Plateau articulated these values in a way that they could not have done as individuals.

Just as Yoder and Trocmé point to the problems of the Constantinianization of the church, George Lindbeck also takes up similar themes as he highlights the importance of the church's communal character, or its "peoplehood." He explains, "It is above all by the character of its communal life that it witnesses, that it proclaims the gospel and serves the

---

[386] Yoder, *The Royal Priesthood*, 61 & 74.

[387] Stone writes, "Jesus talked about the reign of God as a radically new order that comes to put an end to the age-old patterns of wealth and poverty, domination and subordination, insider and outsider that are deeply ingrained in the way we relate to one another on this planet. But in order for that new order to become a serious option *for* the world, it must be visibly and imaginatively embodied *in* the world. And if Scripture is a faithful witness, the purpose of God throughout history is the creation and formation of a new people whose mission is to do just that." *Evangelism after Christendom*, 12.

[388] Similarly, Hauerwas and Willimon explain, "The confessing church, like the conversionist church, also calls people to conversion, but it depicts that conversion as a long process of being baptismally engrafted into a new people, an alternative *polis*, a countercultural social structure called church. It seeks to influence the world by being the church, that is, by being something the world is not and can never be, lacking the gift of faith and vision, which is ours in Christ." *Resident Aliens*, 46.

world."[389] The communal character on the Plateau could be described as one of radical hospitality, service, piety, and love. The character of the communal life of the people of the Plateau Vivarais-Lignon was certainly what allowed them to witness to the gospel in their particular time and place.

Yoder also addresses the "peoplehood" of the church as he explains that because the only true allegiance of this "people" is to God, Christians cannot participate in all of the state's activities.[390] The people of Le Chambon understood this truth as they endeavored to serve those in need, but recognized that there were limits to the way they could do so. For example, their theological convictions forbid them from taking up arms against the enemy, even though this might have been more effective in certain situations. The Chambonnais did participate in some state activities, but were "selective" about those in which they engaged. In being selective they were able to retain their saltiness and therefore to witness to an alternative way of engaging the political reality in which they found themselves.

Trocmé, Lindbeck, and Yoder are not the only theologians who point out the importance of the particularity and the "peoplehood" of the church. Stanley Hauerwas is also well known for arguing that the church must embody a distinctive social and ethical reality. For example, Hauerwas explains that "the church does not have a social ethic; the

---

[389] George Lindbeck, "The Church," in *The Church in a Postliberal Age*, ed. James J. Buckley (Grand Rapids, Michigan: William B. Eerdmans Publishing Company, 2002), 158.

[390] Yoder, *The Royal Priesthood*, 63.

church is a social ethic."[391] This could certainly be said of the people of Le Chambon. They did not necessarily attempt to articulate a certain social ethic, but simply embodied a distinctive social reality. They did occasionally use their words to speak out against injustice, but more often they used their homes, school, and food. They stood within the world, but also remained distinct from the world, and in doing so endeavored to witness to the peaceable kingdom.[392]

The particularity of the people of the Plateau and the "selective" nature of their political activity forced them to think creatively about how to engage issues of oppression and unjust suffering, and thus required them to imagine politics in a broader sense. The gospel did have political implications for the Chambonnais, but this was not a politics defined by borders and the weapons of war. The Chambonnais embodied an alternative communal reality. Of such a community Yoder explains, "The political novelty that God brings into the world is a community of those who serve instead of ruling, who suffer instead of inflicting suffering, whose fellowship crosses social lines instead of reinforcing them."[393] In seeking to serve, coming to the aid of the suffering, and crossing social boundaries the people of the Plateau did indeed create a novel political reality. In its novelty this community challenged the taken for granted reality of the surrounding society, and

---

[391] Stanley Hauerwas, "The Servant Community: Christian Social Ethics (1983)," in *The Hauerwas Reader*, ed. John Berkman and Michael Cartwright (Durham: Duke University Press, 2001), 374.

[392] Hauerwas, "The Servant Community," 377.

[393] Yoder, *The Royal Priesthood: Essays*, 91.

called that society to a higher justice. Their ability to do so was grounded in their theological vision.

Theological Vision

Philip Hallie describes André Trocmé as "profoundly innovative" and "creative." He explains that Trocmé was always coming up with new ideas and had the "power to dream."[394] This sense of vision, the power to dream about a reality beyond the current, was critical to Le Chambon becoming a place of refuge for those living the nightmare of World War II.

An alternative theological vision was central to the ethics of the people of the Plateau.[395] It was this theological vision that gave the Chambonnais the capacity to resist the ethical deception of the surrounding society.[396] Hallie explains that "The Chambonnais under Trocmé . . . would not let themselves be deceived." He states that, "There was no fog for them because they cared enough to see and to act and to be firm. . . . That mixture of lucid knowledge, awareness of the pain of others, and stubborn decision dissipated for the Chambonnais the Night and Fog that inhabited the minds of so many people in Europe, and the world at large, in 1942."[397]

---

[394] Hallie, *Lest Innocent Blood Be Shed*, 157.

[395] About the connection between vision and ethics Hauerwas writes, "Our imagination is the very means by which we live morally, and our moral life is in truth the source of our imagination." *Against the Nations*, 59.

[397] Hallie, *Lest Innocent Blood Be Shed*, 104.

According to Hallie what united the people of Le Chambon was more of an atmosphere.[398] While the ethical radar of the rest of Europe was scattered by the smoke of war, the atmosphere on the Plateau was clear and enabled the people living there to see the reality of the situation. The Huguenot history of the people, their distinctiveness from society, and their theological convictions gave them a clarity of vision that was uncommon at the time.[399] It was this clarity of vision that compelled them to act in ways that were also uncommon. Of this sense of vision Hauerwas and Willimon explain, "We can only act within that world which we see. So the primary ethical question is not, What ought I now to do? but rather, How does the world really look?"[400]

The Chambonnais saw reality in a different way, which compelled them to act in a different way. For most of the world, 20/20 vision about what occurred during World War II was only achieved in hindsight. At the time, most people did not clearly see the racism that was painted on the walls. Prejudice, scapegoating, and a need for security distorted the vision of individuals, the church, and wider society. But for the people of the Plateau the

---

[398] Hallie, *Lest Innocent Blood Be Shed*, 199.

[399] Hauerwas and Willimon write of the relationship between community and clarity of vision, "Christianity is an invitation to be part of an alien people who make a difference because they see something that cannot otherwise be seen without Christ. Right living is more the challenge than right thinking. The challenge is not the intellectual one but the political one – the creation of a new people who have aligned themselves with the seismic shift that has occurred in the world since Christ." *Resident Aliens*, 24. See also *Resident Aliens*, 84: "We can only act within a world we can see. Vision is the necessary prerequisite for ethics. So the Beatitudes are not a strategy for achieving a better society, they are an indication, a picture. A vision of the inbreaking of a new society."

[400] Ibid., 88.

world looked different. They had a perspective that allowed them to see clearly what others could not.

Alexander Schmemann discusses such clarity of vision as he writes about the Eucharist. He explains, "Our *entrance* into the presence of Christ is an entrance into a fourth dimension which allows us to see the ultimate reality of life. It is not an escape from the world, rather it is the arrival at a vantage point from which we can see more deeply the reality of the world."[401] It could be argued that the people of the Plateau did have such a vantage point, which allowed them to see reality for what it was. Further, they did not seek to escape from this reality, but profoundly engaged it.

Because they saw reality differently the Chambonnais also named their reality differently. They did not shy away from naming the destructiveness of the dominant powers, and in naming them attempting to unmask them.[402] They also did not shy away from calling for personal responsibility on behalf of those who were a part of the system. For example when one of the Vichy policemen attempted to arrest some of the youth of Le Chambon, Daniel Trocmé, the son of André Trocmé's cousin, publicly declared, "'I accuse this man of being responsible for this arrest.'"[403] In doing so he challenged the idea that the officer was

---

[401] Alexander Schmemann, *Fot the Life of the World* (Crestwood, NY: St Vladimir's Seminary Press, 1973), 27.

[402] "The church gives us the interpretive skills, a truthful understanding whereby we first see the world for what it is." Hauerwas and Willimon, *Resident Aliens*, 38. See also *Resident Aliens*, 146: "The church is the colony that gives us resident aliens the interpretive skills whereby we know honestly how to name what is happening and what to do about it."

[403] Hallie, *Lest Innocent Blood Be Shed*, 207.

"just following orders" and forced him to take personal responsibility for his role in the system.

The theological vision of the people of the Plateau enabled them to see the strangers arriving at their doors as fellow humans rather than as scapegoats for the problems of European society. When the Vichy officials arrived in Le Chambon searching for Jewish refugees, André Trocmé very clearly stated that they did not distinguish between Jews and non-Jews in the village. In reality, however, most of the villagers were likely aware of who was Jewish and who was not. Trocmé's point was that they did not define personhood in the way the Vichy officials did. They understood all persons as valuable in the sight of God. Further, it was the people who were marginalized by society who were particularly valuable and loved by God. Trocmé explains, "What matters primarily to God is the lot of the poor" – therefore it is actually the rich who should be concerned about their salvation.[404] This was an upside-down way of viewing personhood, and reality in general.[405] Yet, this upside-down theological vantage point provided the central impetus for the rescue efforts on the Plateau.

Embassy of the Reign of God

Throughout history Christians have developed many different models for understanding the nature and ministry of the church. Scripture employs the model of the

---

[404] Trocmé, *Jesus and the Nonviolent Revolution*, 39.

[405] A further example of this upside-down vision is found in Trocme's discussion of Jesus' ethic. Trocmé explains, "He was not concerned with the reform of certain details, but with overturning everything, including the entire economic hierarchy of society. The rich, as attached as they are to their possessions, are relegated to the last rank, whereas the 'poor in spirit,' who have voluntarily thrown off their possessions to fulfill the Jubilee, are now in the first rank." Ibid., 41.

body of Christ, Augustine called the church a hospital for the sick, and Martin Luther King, Jr., called Christians to create a "beloved community." While it is beyond the scope of this dissertation to examine the merits of the many models for how Christians should relate to the each other and to the wider world, this chapter will focus on one model that is particularly pertinent in relation to the community of Le Chambon: the church as an embassy of the reign of God.

Guder et al., discuss the church as an embassy of the reign of God in their book *Missional Church: A Vision for the Sending of the Church in North America*. They develop this image in relation to Paul's description of Christians as "ambassadors for Christ" (2 Cor. 5:20 NRSV).[406] The authors write:

> The church publicly announces the reign of God because it is an embassy full of ambassadors of the reign of God (2 Cor. 5:20). . . . Ambassadors are fully engaged with representatives of the country to which they are sent, but they are clear about their loyalties to the nation from which they have come and about the mission on which they have been sent.[407]

In addition to the passage from second Corinthians that calls upon Christians to be ambassadors for Christ, another early Christian text that speaks to this model of the church is the *Epistle of Diognetus*. Though the exact date and author of this text are unknown, it was written sometime during the second century and provides important insight into how Christians understood their place in society. The author of the *Epistle of Diognetus* writes:

---

[406] Darrell L. Guder et al., *Missional Church: A Vision for the Sending of the Church in North America* (Grand Rapids: Wm. B Eerdmans Publishing Company, 1998), 102.

[407] Ibid., 136.

> But, inhabiting Greek as well as barbarian cities, according as the lot of each of them has determined, and following the customs of the locals in respect to clothing, food, and the rest of their regular daily life, they [Christians] display to us their wonderful and admittedly striking way of life. They dwell in their own countries, but simply as sojourners. As citizens, they share in all things with others, and yet endure all things as if foreigners. Every foreign land is to them as their native country, and every land of their birth as a land of strangers.[408]

From this text one gains a sense of how early Christians understood their identities as ambassadors in foreign lands. The text reflects the ecclesial model that will be explored in this chapter – the church as an embassy of the reign of God.

Rooted in scripture and early Christianity, this model of the church is particularly important in helping Christians understand their place as being "in the world but not of it." It highlights the inherent tension between Christian discipleship and national citizenship. Samuel Wells writes about this tension, "The issue is one of sovereignty. If Jesus is Lord, then it is his activity, not that of these competing powers, that determines the meaning of history. Jesus' lordship relativizes the sovereignty of all other powers."[409] Christians must give their ultimate loyalty to the gospel: or to the reign of God. If there is conflict between the law of the land and the gospel of Christ, Christian allegiance is to the latter.[410] Thus the church as an embassy of the reign of God disrupts the claims of sovereignty of the nation-states. One example of this occurred when Vichy officials visited Le Chambon on a national

---

[408] Quoted in Oden, *And You Welcomed Me*, 40.

[409] Samuel Wells, *Transforming Fate Into Destiny: The Theological Ethics of Stanley Hauerwas* (Eugene, OR: Cascade Books, 1998), 91.

[410] When government officials came to Le Chambon looking for Jews, "the two pastors spoke from the high pulpit against the west wall, and what they presented to the people was a declaration that urged them to obey God rather than man when there is a conflict between the commandments of the government and the commandments of the Bible." Hallie, *Lest Innocent Blood Be Shed*, 109.

holiday in search of Jews. The youth of the village drafted a letter (likely with Trocmé's help) protesting the state's treatment of the Jews and read it to the officials. Robert Bach, the regional prefect, is reported to have said to Trocmé, "On this day of national harmony, you sow discord."[411] Loyalty to the values of the kingdom often brings discord in relation to other claims of sovereignty.

The Chambonnais displayed a keen sensitivity in detecting the state's attempts to coerce the church in order to buttress its own agenda. The power of the German myth had to do with the quasi-divine status the state claimed for itself. The values and victories of the state provided a source of ultimate meaning in the minds of most of its citizens. The model of the church as an embassy calls Christians to think critically about national and religious loyalties, and distinguish between the two.[412] As ambassadors of the reign of God, Christians are shaped by the stories of Israel and Jesus, as well as the stories of the nations in which

---

[411] Mordecai Paldiel, *The Righteous Among the Nations: Rescuers of Jews During the Holocaust* (Jerusalem: The Jerusalem Publishing House and Yad Vashem, 2007), 491.

[412] Victoria J. Barnett writes, "In any case, the course followed by most church leaders during the Nazi era was consistent with their own understanding of individual and institutional ethics. Shaped by a long tradition of obedience to state authorities, the German Evangelical Church viewed conformity and obedience to authority as virtues." *Bystanders: Conscience and Complicity During the Holocaust* (Westport, CT: Praeger Publishers, 1999), 39. André Trocmé documents an interesting story in his unpublished memoirs. He recalls that during Marshall Pétain's reign churches were required to ring their bells for an hour at noon on August 1, 1942 to celebrate the one year anniversary of his regime. Trocmé instructed the doorkeeper of the church, a woman named Amelia, not to ring the bells, "and she did not. On the next day, when she came to the parsonage the pastor inquired: 'Did everything turn alright yesterday, Amelia?' 'Yes, Sir' – 'Did anybody come to ring the bells?' 'No, Sir' – 'Really, Amelia?' 'Well, of course, she said, some ladies came from uptown and wanted me to ring the bells but I answered that the bells did not belong to Marshall Pétain but our Lord.'" The woman wanted to enter to church but Amelia blocked the door. They waited out in the rain for half an hour before giving up. Trocmé writes how every time he goes through the door he can't help but think of the four foot six inch Amelia defending the church without violence, but armed with God's authority. André Trocmé, "Memories," Swarthmore College Peace Collection, Swarthmore, PA.

they live. This model, however, shows that the Christian story must be primary in making decisions about how to treat foreigners, engaging in violence, practicing forgiveness, etc.[413]

The imagery of this model highlights the distinctive nature of the church. The norms that govern this embassy are noticeably different, or even upside-down, from the laws of most societies.[414] These norms are found in scripture, and particularly in the teachings of Jesus. The Sermon on the Mount, and the Beatitudes in particular, demonstrate the upside-down nature of God's kingdom.[415] This is a society where the poor, persecuted, and humble have the largest inheritance (the Earth and the kingdom of heaven), justice is fulfilled, and vicious cycles of violence are broken for good. Likewise, the doors of this embassy are not guarded by armed soldiers, but are flung wide open, inviting all to enter.

In fact, one of the goals of this embassy is to form disciples who are capable of loving their enemies. Magda Trocmé demonstrated this kind of love when her husband was about to be arrested and she invited the arresting officers to have dinner with the family, a story mentioned previously. One of the officers was unable to eat and on the verge of tears.[416] It is hard to say exactly what impact this experience had on him, but the story

---

[413] Hauerwas explains that the goal of ethics is "to assemble reminders from the training we receive in worship that enable us to rightly see the world and to perceive how we continue to be possessed by the world." *In Good Company: The Church as Polis* (Notre Dame: University of Notre Dame Press, 1997), 156.

[414] See Donald Kraybill, *The Upside-Down Kingdom* (Scottdale, PA: Herald Press, 1971). See also Yoder: "This is the original revolution; the creation of a distinct community with its own deviant set of values and its coherent way of incarnating them." *For the Nations*, 175.

[415] "Whenever a people are bound together in loyalty to a story that includes something as strange as the Sermon on the Mount, we are put at odds with the world." Hauerwas and Willimon, *Resident Aliens*, 94.

[416] Hallie, *Lest Innocent Blood Be Shed*, 20.

demonstrates the power of being on the receiving end of love for enemies. It may not always bring about the conversion desired, but in this case such love appeared to cause the arresting officer to lose his appetite and question the nature of what he was doing.[417] Loving one's enemies is no easy task, but the values of the kingdom are the guiding norms of this embassy, and therefore part of its mission is to witness to the reality that one's enemy also needs food. The kingdom this embassy represents is essentially one of nonviolence, enemy love, and radical hospitality.

Christians are thus able to engage fully in their places of residence, but also recognize that their identity is located in a kingdom that transcends and triumphs nationality.[418] The reign of God is more real to them than national borders and check-points, even if the guards at those check-points have guns. For example, they recognize that even though nations are plagued by violence, God's reign is one of shalom, and that is what is most real.[419]

The image of the church as an embassy is also related to the story of Le Chambon in another way. In times of war and political upheaval, an embassy is the place citizens

---

[417] The witness of the Chambonnais also had an impact on others who would be considered "enemies" of the village. Trocmé explains in his unpublished "Memories" that several police officers had been "converted to our viewpoint" and were helping them save lives. The day before a raid he would sometimes get a mysterious phone call warning him to "look out" for an impending raid. André Trocmé and Magda Trocmé Papers, Swarthmore College Peace Collection, Swarthmore, PA.

[418] "We would like a church that again asserts that God, not nations, rules the world, that the boundaries of God's kingdom transcend those of Caesar, and that the main political task of the church is the formation of people who see clearly the cost of discipleship and are willing to pay the price." Hauerwas and Willimon, *Resident Aliens*, 48. See also Stone: "Yet no city can ever be 'home' for the people of God (Heb. 13:14), and no love for, engagement with, or service to the world can diminish the truth that this people inevitably represents an alternative social arrangement wherever it is in the world." *Evangelism after Christendom*, 116.

[419] See the first chapter of William T. Cavanaugh, *Theopolitical Imagination: Discovering the Liturgy as a Political Act in an Age of Global Consumerism* (New York: T & T Clark, 2002).

traveling and living in foreign lands can go to in order to find refuge and protection. Here the image of the church as an embassy of the reign of God is both similar to and different from the role of national embassies. National embassies only protect their own citizens. However, the church as the embassy of the reign of God welcomes and tries to protect all who are persecuted. Its mission of hospitality extends beyond political and social boundaries. The Chambonnais did not just welcome persecuted Christians; their primary mission was to shelter Jewish children. Like an embassy, the church is a place of refuge. The church as the embassy of the reign of God witnesses to the hospitality of God's reign, a hospitality that transcends established boundaries.

Likewise, the church is different from most national embassies in that it invites all people to become citizens. That is its primary mission as a light to the nations. As any immigrant knows, the process of applying for residency and citizenship in another country is long and usually limited to only a few who meet very specific conditions. Becoming a citizen of the kingdom also occurs over a period of time, as citizenship classes (or catechesis) are certainly very important. The goal of this embassy, however, is to invite all to become citizens and to do everything in its power to help them in this process.[420]

The story of Le Chambon ultimately illustrates the power of the church as a redemptive community. The church certainly does not only exist for itself; as a redemptive community it exists for the sake of the world. It exists for the redemption of its members,

---

[420] "And essential to the way that God has taken matters in hand is an invitation to all people to become citizens of a new Kingdom, a messianic community where the world God is creating takes visible, practical form." Hauerwas and Willimon, *Resident Aliens*, 87.

the redemption of those in need, and the redemption of the society in which it is situated. In its nature as an embassy it functions as a model and calls the world toward its intended purpose.[421]

At its heart, redemption involves being liberated from bondage and delivered into freedom. The people of the Plateau were delivered from the sin of lack of love for their neighbors as well as the sins of prejudice, xenophobia, and hatred. Members of the village church recognized that their own redemption was connected to how they treated the "least of these." Trocmé writes, "The power of salvation is such that it brings with it acts of liberation."[422] For many of the villagers of Le Chambon salvation involved being liberated from hatred and liberated to love. It was not liberation to personal freedom, but liberation to love the other, particularly the other who had no shelter.[423]

As an embassy of the reign of God the church witnesses in a foreign land to a redeemed vision of life. In doing so it functions as a redemptive community and as a sign or foretaste of what is to come.[424] Its way of life is grounded in the teachings of Jesus, which

---

[421] "The community, in its corporate life, is called to embody an alternative order that stands as a sign of God's redemptive purposes in the world." Richard Hays, "Ecclesiology and Ethics in 1 Corinthians," *Ex Auditu* 10 (1994): 33.

[422] *Jesus and the Nonviolent* Revolution, 39.

[423] Hallie writes, "But the people of Le Chambon whom Pastor André Trocmé led into a quiet struggle against Vichy and the Nazis were not fighting for the liberation of their country or their village. They felt little loyalty to governments. Their actions did not serve the self-interest of the little commune of Le Chambon-sur-Lignon in the department of Haute-Loire, southern France. On the contrary, those actions flew in the face of that self-interest: by resisting a power far greater than their own they put their village in grave danger of massacre . . . ." *Lest Innocent Blood Be Shed*, 9-10.

[424] "The believing community is the beginning, the pilot run, the bridgehead of the new world on the way." Yoder, *For the Nations*, 216. See also Schmemann, *For the Life of the World*, 93: "The Church is in the world but not of the world, because only by *not* being of the world can it reveal and manifest the 'world to come,' the

call the world to a higher form of justice: a justice that is based in God's eschatological reign of shalom.[425] It is the future, specifically God's future, that gives shape and direction to the present.[426] Trocmé understood Jesus' teachings as a foretaste or "foreshadowing" of the coming reign of God. For example he explains that when Jesus said, "'Sell your possessions and give to the poor' . . . it was neither a counsel of perfection, nor a constitutional law founding a utopian state. It was rather a joyful announcement to be put into practice here and now in A.D. 26 as a 'refreshment' foreshadowing the restitution of all things."[427] Jesus' teachings are not simply high ideals, nor are they legal models. They are rather teachings about what it means to live for the reign of God in the present, and in doing so to witness to God's future reign of shalom. Through such practices as giving to the poor, aiding those in need, and living peacefully in a violent world, disciples live according to God's original intent for creation and at the same time act out a preview of what is to come. The church thus

---

beyond, which alone reveals all things as *old* – yet new and eternal in the love of God." Similarly Stone explains, "To be called to discipleship, therefore, is to be called into a company of disciples that is both sign and foretaste of a new social order as well as a participation in and agent of that new order." *Evangelism After Christendom*, 78.

[425] Stone writes, "And so it is that to live within the social imaginary of shalom – to worship God and thus to be able to see anew, to obey God and thus to be led down new paths – is to live in such a way that the resort to violence is no longer an option." *Evangelism after Christendom*, 71. See also Yoder: "Church and world are not two compartments under separate legislation or two institutions with contradictory assignments, but two levels of pertinence of the same Lordship. The people of God is called to be today what the world is called to be ultimately." *Body Politics: Five Practices of the Christian Community Before the Watching World* (Scottdale, PA: Herald Press, 1992), ix.

[426] "Out metaphors and stories entice us to find a way to bring into existence the reality that at once should be but will not be except as we act as if it is. Morally the world is always wanting to be created in correspondence to what it is but is not yet." Hauerwas, "Vision, Stories, and Character," in *The Hauerwas Reader*, 168.

[427] Trocmé, *Jesus and the Nonviolent Revolution*, 38.

offers a critique of the present order, but contained within that critique are seeds of hope, the mustard seeds of the kingdom.[428] As ambassadors of the reign of God Christians live boldly in the present, but do so as a testimony to creation's future eschatological fulfillment.

[428] Stone explains, "If the first thing to be said about Jesus' evangelism, then, is that it announces and invites persons into a new government called the reign of God, a second observation is that because the new social order made possible by God's reign runs counter to the present order, Jesus' proclamation of God's reign requires a radical critique of the present order." *Evangelism after Christendom*, 80.

CHAPTER NINE

CONCLUSION

In remembrance resides the secret of redemption.

—Jewish proverb

In Elie Wiesel's book, *The Town Beyond the Wall*, the protagonist, Michael, returns to his hometown, from where he had been deported by the Nazis a few years earlier. He recalls seeing a face in the window during the deportation, a face with an expression of indifference. Michael reflects,

> This, this was the thing I had wanted to understand ever since the war. Nothing else. How a human being can remain indifferent. The executioners I understood; also the victims, though with more difficulty. For the others, all the others, those who were neither for nor against, those who sprawled in passive patience, those who told themselves, 'The storm will blow over and everything will be normal again,' those who thought themselves above the battle, those who were permanently and merely spectators – all those were closed to me, incomprehensible.[429]

This dissertation has not answered Michael's question. How millions of people remained passive bystanders while millions of innocent men, women, and children were executed remains the enduring question of the Holocaust. This dissertation has, however, endeavored to understand the theological and ethical convictions of a community that did take action- of people who did not remain indifferent and did not stand by while children were sent to gas chambers. Its faith-based compassion, courage, and committed action made this community a small beacon of hope during an exceedingly dark period of history, and have continued to inform and inspire ever since.

---

[429] Elie Wiesel, *The Town Beyond the Wall* (New York: Avon Books, 1969), 159.

However, in analyzing this beacon of light, it is important not to minimize the darkness that occurred during the Holocaust. There is a legitimate fear that "shining light on the rescue behavior of non-Jews [will] somehow brighten and thereby deny the darkness of the cavern."[430] The vast majority of those hunted by Hitler did not find places of refuge.[431] The vast majority, like the fictional but still historical Michael, were deported from their hometowns; most met a premature death in labor camps and gas chambers. The small beam of light on the Plateau Vivarais-Lignon does not disperse the darkness of the ash of human bodies that covered much of Europe in the early 1940s.

Without minimizing the atrocities that occurred during World War II, there is a place for researching rescue and resistance activities during the Holocaust. Indeed, such research actually points to the reality that in some cases it was possible to resist Hitler and the atrocities of his regime; research does not deny darkness. Mary Jo Leddy explains: "The fact that their actions seem so exceptional simply proves the rule – that the majority of the non-Jewish population did nothing to help their fellow citizens."[432]

This dissertation has explored the theology and ethics that motivated one community to act with exceptional courage and conviction. In exploring the actions of this community the themes of narrative, hospitality, character, nonviolence, and the witness of the church

---

[430] Rabbi Harold M. Schulweis, foreword to *The Altruistic Personality: Rescuers of Jews in Nazi Europe*, by Pearl and Samuel Oliner (New York: The Free Press, 1988), x.

[431] Estimates vary regarding the number of people who acted as "Righteous Gentiles" during the Holocaust, ranging from 0.01 percent to 0.50 percent. Patrick Henry, *We Only Know Men: The Rescue of Jews in France During the Holocaust* (Washington, D.C.: The Catholic University of America Press, 2007), 142.

[432] Mary Jo Leddy, foreword to *Quiet Heroes, True Stories of the Rescue of Jews by Christians in Nazi-occupied Holland*, by André Stein (New York: New York University Press, 1988), 2- 3.

have been prominent. These themes are points of entry onto the Plateau and play an important role in helping to map the religious and ethical terrain of this mountainous region.

The Huguenot narrative of exile and persecution was alive in the hearts and minds of many of the villagers and was a key ingredient in making the soil on the Plateau fertile for rescue and resistance. The religious history of Reformed Christianity in France, and the role of narrative in shaping ethical behavior, therefore, have both been important themes in this study. Examining the history of the Reformed faith in France, the dissertation has pointed to the integral connection between the Huguenot experience of persecution and Calvin's doctrine of predestination.[433] It has also traced the relationship between the early Reformed experience of diaspora and the Chambonnais willingness to welcome Jewish refugees into their homes. The historical Huguenot experience of homelessness made the Reformed Christians on the Plateau more sympathetic to the plight of the Jews, both theologically and emotionally. Calvin himself experienced periods of displacement and his movement has been labeled by some scholars as the "Reformation of the Refugees."[434] The early Reformed experience of diaspora caused Calvinist Christians to question the classical theological assumption that the homelessness of the Jews was a sign of God's scorn.[435] Likewise, the Huguenots understood their own journey through the "desert" in light of the desert

---

[433] Heiko Oberman, *The Two Reformations: The Journey from the Last Days to the New World*, ed. Donald Weinstein (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2003), 114-115.

[434] Church Historian Heiko Oberman uses the phrase "Reformation of the Refugees" to describe the Calvinist Reformation. For example see Heiko A. Oberman, "Europa afflicta: The Reformation of the Refugees,"*Archiv für Reformationsgeschichte* 83 (1992): 91-111.

[435] Oberman, *The Two Reformations*, 83-84 & 148-149.

experience of the Jews in the Hebrew Bible: an experience which made them more sympathetic to the increasing persecution of the Jews of their own time. In addition to this religious history, the Plateau had an infrastructure that allowed for the reception of guests. Having been a tourist destination for many French families and a health refuge for impoverished children prior to World War II, the communities on the Plateau had a number of hotels, *pensions*, and children's homes that enabled easier reception of refugees arriving in the area. This infrastructure and the religious history of the area were key factors that allowed this remote region of France to become a place of hospitality for those fleeing Hitler and his henchmen.

While the Huguenot narrative of persecution and exile was of central importance in making the ground on the Plateau fertile for rescue and resistance, it was the village pastor, André Trocmé who planted the seeds. In an effort to understand Trocmé's leadership as pastor, this dissertation has traced the formative influences and events in Trocmé's own theological and moral development. His cross-cultural family, the early death of his mother, the displacement his family experienced during World War I, his membership in a Christian youth organization, and his exposure to conscientious objectors all profoundly influenced his moral and theological development. For Trocmé, the gospel of Jesus Christ was the only valid response to the atrocities perpetrated by the Third Reich.[436] Central to Trocmé's understanding of the gospel was the idea that Christ had come to inaugurate the kingdom of God, a kingdom to which the Hebrew prophets pointed, and which was grounded in the

---

[436] André Trocmé, *Angels and Donkeys: Tales for Christmas and Other Times*, trans. Nelly Trocmé Hewett (Intercourse, PA: Good Books, 1998), 3.

Jubilee principles of the Hebrew Bible. The kingdom of God is a revolutionary new order where the poor are cared for, enemies are loved, justice is achieved, and shalom prevails. Trocmé's theological convictions about Christ and the kingdom of God were the driving force of his life, and sheltering Jewish refugees on the Plateau gave form and substance to those beliefs.

In relation to the events that occurred on the Plateau, this dissertation has also paid specific attention to the way human lives are claimed by many stories, and argued for the importance of theological discernment in determining which narrative(s) should be primary. In the case of the Plateau Vivarais-Lignon, the religious narratives of the Judeo-Christian tradition and of their ancestors provided lenses through which they could more clearly recognize the immorality of the persecution against the Jews, while the moral lenses of most Europeans were clouded by the propaganda of the Third Reich. This analysis suggests that greater emphasis should be placed on the role of narrative in moral education and religious formation. Along these lines this dissertation has focused on the role of liturgy as an enacted counter narrative, the performance of which calls into question and properly orders other narratives that claim one's life. Through worship the church offers the world an alternative vision, a paradigm of life lived according to the values of the reign of God. Worship itself is moral formation and has profound significance not only for individuals, but also for the world as a whole. It is important, also, to recognize that while the narrative of the Judeo-Christian tradition challenges conflicting values that claim one's life, it also requires openness to the other. The dissertation has argued that even though this might seem like a paradox, it is a necessary tension that is needed in order to remain faithful to the Christian story.

Indeed, written into the Judeo-Christian narrative is a sense of openness to the stranger; it could be argued that keeping one's door closed to the refugee in need is a sign of an operative false narrative.

It was after Trocmé met with Burns Chalmers of the American Friends Service Committee that Le Chambon became an official, though clandestine, place of refuge for those persecuted by the policies of the Third Reich. More than anything else it is this radical hospitality for which the Chambonnais are remembered. In relation to the concept of narrative, this dissertation has therefore sought to explore the practice of hospitality on the Plateau, in light of both its Huguenot history and the biblical narrative. The radical hospitality extended in this mountainous region of France pushes popular conceptions of hospitality beyond their normal boundaries of friends, family, social class, and ethnic group. It also testifies to the reality that hospitality sometimes involves risk. This analysis points to the need to reclaim the radical nature of Christian hospitality, or at least not to confuse it with practices of hospitality that reinforce, rather than transcend, social barriers of race, ethnicity, ideology, and nationality. The actions of the Chambonnais witness to the imperative in the Hebrew Bible to care for the stranger, and the subversive ways in which Jesus practiced hospitality. The Huguenot hospitality challenged a state ideology that labeled Jews as less than human. It was indeed a political act, as welcoming the stranger into one's home called into question the rampant xenophobia of the time. Likewise, it testifies to the reality that true hospitality often takes place on the margins.

Even though the entire Plateau became a place of hospitality, it is important to recognize that each individual made her or his own decision to extend hospitality to the

stranger at the door. Yet, when asked about their decisions to help, many of the villagers reported that it was simply the "natural" thing to do. In this dissertation I have argued that their use of the term "natural" speaks to the topic of character, as one's character is by and large constituted by actions that one considers to be "natural." Yet, if their actions were "natural," the vast majority of people would have acted in the same way, and there probably would have been no Holocaust. Samuel and Pearl Oliner, whose extensive research on rescuers during the Holocaust has been documented in the book *The Altruistic Personality*, have also found that most rescuers report "rarely reflecting" before deciding to help and making their decision within minutes of being asked.[437] The immediacy with which most rescuers made their decisions, and their testimony that it was the "natural" thing to do, point to the importance of character and character formation in this community's ethics. This analysis calls for an increased emphasis on the role of character in moral and religious formation. This dissertation has therefore examined some of the means of character formation on the Plateau, particularly exploring the role of the school, the family, the church, and small groups in fostering character development. In doing so it points to the need for further research into the means by which character is formed. It has likewise highlighted the importance of community in character formation, suggesting there are similarities between learning to be moral and learning a language.[438] This analysis indicates

---

[437] Samuel P. Oliner and Pearl M. Oliner, *The Altruistic Personality: Rescuers of Jews in Nazi Europe* (New York: The Free Press, 1988), 169.

[438] Hauerwas and Willimon, *Resident Aliens: Life in the Christian Colony* (Nashville: Abingdon, 1989), 97. George Lindbeck also discusses the way doctrine functions as grammar in *The Nature of Doctrine: Religion and Theology in a Postliberal Age* (Louisville: Westminster John Knox Press, 1984). See also N.T. Wright's discussion

the need for models to teach the language of character, and highlights the importance of being a part of a community in order to be immersed in the language. Ultimately, this dissertation draws connections between character formation and narrative, so that when one is faced with difficult decisions, acting in a "righteous" manner is what comes "naturally."

For the people on the Plateau, loving one's enemies was part of what it meant to have good character. This was expressed in numerous ways, one of which was their commitment to nonviolence. In conversations about the effectiveness of nonviolence, the Holocaust is often used as a trump card to argue that violent conflict is sometimes necessary. The people of the Plateau Vivarais-Lignon are, however, an example of effective nonviolent resistance as they were indeed successful in saving the lives of thousands of people. Yet, they chose this path not simply because nonviolence was an effective strategy, but because many came to believe that nonviolence was a matter of faithfulness to the gospel of Christ. This conviction was due largely to the influence of their pastors, who spoke forthrightly from the pulpit about the centrality of nonviolence to the gospel. This study has therefore traced the development of Trocmé's commitment to nonviolence and examined the Christological shape of those convictions. In light of this commitment to nonviolence, this dissertation explored the classic tension between faithfulness and effectiveness, as well as the "active" nature of pacifism. The embodied witness of the villagers and farmers demonstrates that nonviolence does not mean sitting back and letting others be killed, but does mean acting

---

of the relationship between virtue and learning a language in *After You Believe: Why Character Matters* (New York: HarperCollins, 2010), 41.

courageously and creatively to bring about peace, possibly including by putting one's own life on the line. It also points to the important connection between imagination and nonviolence- both in imagining alternative possibilities, and in questioning the dominant ideology of war. This community calls into question the idea that violence is the only option for achieving justice. Ultimately, the witness of the people on the Plateau demonstrates that nonviolence should not be just a theory: it must be an embodied reality and have practical consequences.

Finally, this dissertation has endeavored to explore the nature and mission of the church in the world, in light of the story of Le Chambon. The events that occurred on the Plateau testify to the importance of the church's distinctive identity as a community shaped by the values of God's reign. The distinctive theological vision of this community was of utmost importance in allowing them to see clearly the immorality and idolatry of the Third Reich, and in helping them to imagine ways of reaching out to those persecuted by the regime. Because of their distinctive identity the Chambonnais were able to imagine a different reality, one in which refugees were to be welcomed. Their story points to the important connection between ethical action and the ability to imagine a reality other than the present. Their witness resonates with the model of the church as the embassy of the reign of God and testifies to the hospitable and nonviolent nature of this reign.

This dissertation has argued that the village of Le Chambon is a model from which others can continue to learn. What took place in this remote region of France has an enduring legacy and continues to have profound importance, not only for ecclesial communities, but for the world as a whole. The community points beyond itself and is an

embodied witness to the values of hospitality, compassion, and shalom. It was a communal effort to aid the persecuted like no other. While the exact number of refugees sheltered on the Plateau remains unknown, estimates suggest that the vast majority of residents welcomed those who knocked at their doors: there was approximately one refugee per inhabitant.

While it is important not to minimize the atrocities of the Holocaust, the actions of these villagers and peasants point to the possibility of goodness in a time when the world seemed entirely dark. In this sense, this community is a "light to the nations." Through their deep convictions and courageous action the people of the Plateau witness to a saying from the Talmud that is inscribed on the medals Yad Vashem awards to Righteous Gentiles: "Whosoever saves a single life saves an entire universe."

BIBLIOGRAPHY

Aquinas, Thomas. *Summa Theologiae.* 60 vols. New York: Blackfriars, 1964-76.

Aristotle. *Nicomachean Ethics.* Translated by Martin Ostwald. Indianapolis: Bobbs-Merrill, 1962.

Arterbury, Andrew. "Entertaining Angels: Hospitality in Luke and Acts." *Christian Reflection: A Series in Faith and Ethics* (2007). http://www.baylor.edu/content/services/document.php/53378.pdf (accessed June 28, 2010).

Aubin, Henry T. *Rise of the Golden Cobra.* Toronto: Annick Press, 2007.

Augustine. "Sermon 61." In *Homilies on the Gospels*. Trans. R. G. MacMullen. In *Nicene and Post-Nicene Fathers of the Christian Church*. Ed. Philip Schaff. 1st Ser. New York: The Christian Literature Company, 1887.

Barnett, Victoria J. *Bystanders: Conscience and Complicity During the Holocaust*. Westport, CT: Praeger Publishers, 1999.

Benedict, Philip. *Christ's Churches Purely Reformed: A Social History of Calvinism.* New Haven: Yale University Press, 2002.

———. *The Faith and Fortunes of France's Huguenots, 1600-1685.* Aldershot: Ashgate, 2001.

Bernard, Serge. "La Construction De La Mémoire Légendaire Au Chambon-Sur-Lignon." Master's thesis, Université de Paris, 2000.

Block, Gary, and Malka Drucker. *Rescuers: Portraits of Moral Courage in the Holocaust*. New York: Holmes & Meier Publishers, 1992.

Blumenthal, David R. *The Banality of Good and Evil: Moral Lessons from the Shoah and Jewish Tradition.* Washington, D.C.: Georgetown University Press, 1999.

Boismorand, Pierre. *Magda et André Trocmé, figures de resistances.* Paris: Le cerf, 2008.

Bolle, Pierre, ed. *Le Plateau Vivarais-Lignon: Accueil et Résistance 1939-1944*. Le Chambon-sur-Lignon: Société d' Histoire de la Montagne, 1992.

Bollon, Gérard. *Le Chambon d'hier et d'aujourd'hui.* Le Cheylard: Editions Dolmazon, 1999.

———. "Contribution à l'histoire du Chambon-sur-Lignon: Le foyer universitaire des Roches et la Rafle de 1943." *Cahiers de la Haute-Loire* (1996): 391-421.

———. "Identité du plateau protestant Vivarais-Lignon." *Les cahiers du Mezenc*, no.11 (July 1999).

———. "La Montagne vellave terre d'accueil du XVIIIe au milieu du XXe siècle." *Cahiers de la Haute-Loire* (1991): 213-224.

Boulet, François. 'L'Attitude Spirituelle des Protestants devant les Juifs Réfugiés.' In *Le Plateau Vivarais-Lignon*, edited by Pierre Bolle, 401-428. Le Chambon-sur-Lignon: Société d' Histoire de la Montagne, 1992.

———. "Etrangers et Juifs en Haute-Loire de 1936 à 1944." *Cahiers de la Haute-Loire* (1992): 301-355.

———. *Les Montagnes Françaises 1940-1944: Des montagnes-refuges aux montagnes maquis*. Villeneuve-d'Ascq: Presses Universitaires du Septentrion, 1997.

———. "Quelques elements statistiques." In *Le Plateau Vivarais-Lignon*, edited by Pierre Bolle. Le Chambon-sur-Lignon: Société d' Histoire de la Montagne, 1992.

Bouwsma, William J. *John Calvin: A Sixteenth-Century Portrait*. New York: Oxford University Press, 1988.

Budde, Michael and John Wright, eds. *Conflicting Allegiances: The Church-Based University in a Liberal Democratic Society*. Grand Rapids: Brazos Press, 2004.

Cabanel, Patrick, and Laurent Gervereau, eds. *La Deuxième Guerre mondiale, des terres de refuge aux musées*. Le Chambon-sur-Lignon: Sivom Vivarais-Lignon, 2003.

Calvin, John. *Commentaries on the Four Last Books of Moses*. Grand Rapids: William B. Eerdmans, 1950.

Calvin, John. *Institutes of the Christian Religion*. Edited by John T. McNeill. Translated by Ford Lewis Battles. 2 vols. Philadelphia: Westminster, 1960.

Calvin's New Testament Commentaries. Edited by T. H. L. Parker. Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1964.

Campbell, Charles. "Hans W. Frei." In *A New Handbook of Christian Theologians*, edited by Donald W. Musser and Joseph L. Price, 151-157. Nashville: Abingdon Press, 1996.

———. *The Word Before the Powers: An Ethic of Preaching*. Louisville: Westminster John Knox, 2002.

Carrol, Mark. "A Haven from Hitler." *Sunday Times Magazine*, June 4, 2006.

Carter, Craig A. *The Politics of the Cross: The Theology and Social Ethics of John Howard Yoder.* Grand Rapids: Brazos Press, 2001.

Cartwright, Michael. *Practices, Politics, and Performance: Toward a Communal Hermeneutic for Christian Ethics.* Eugene, OR: Wipf and Stock Publishers, 2006.

Cavanaugh, William T. *Theopolitical Imagination.* London: T & T Clark, 2002.

———. *Torture and Eucharist: Theology, Politics, and the Body of Christ.* Oxford: Blackwell, 1998.

Chabrut, Gilbert, Roger Darcissac, and André Trocmé. *Le Visage Et L'âme Du Chambon*. Le Chambon-sur-Lignon: Editions Messageries Evangéliques, 1943.

Colker-Steiner, Connie. *Shoes for Amélie.* Montreal: Lobster Press, 2001.

Corpus Reformatorum: Joannis Calvini Opera Quae Spersunt Omnia. Edited by Guilielmus Baum, Eduardus Cunitz, and Eduardus Reuss. Brunswick: C. A. Schwetschke et Filium, 1863-1897). Vol. 51, Column 105. Quoted in John H. Leith, *John Calvin's Doctrine of the Christian Life*. Louisville: Westminster/John Knox Press, 1989.

Curtet, Daniel. "Témoignage d'un ancient Pasteur." In *Le Plateau Vivarais-Lignon*, edited by Pierre Bolle. Le Chambon-sur-Lignon: Société d' Histoire de la Montagne, 1992.

Dawn, Marva. *Powers, Weakness, and the Tabernacling of God.* Grand Rapids: Wm. B. Eerdmans, 2001.

———. *A Royal "Waste" of Time: The Splendor of Worshipping God and Being Church for the World.* Grand Rapids: William B. Eerdmans, 1999.

———. *Truly the Community: Romans 12 and How to Be the Church.* Grand Rapids: William B. Eerdmans, 1992.

Dehart, Paul. *Trial of Witnesses: The Rise and Decline of Postliberal Theology*. Oxford: Blackwell, 2006.

DeSaix, Deborah Durland and Karen Gray Ruelle. *Hidden on the Mountain: Stories of Children Sheltered from the Nazis in Le Chambon*. New York: Holyday House, 2007.

Dietrich, Donald. *God and Humanity in Auschwitz: Jewish-Christian Relations and Sanctioned Murder.* New Brunswick: Transaction Publications, 1995.

Doak, Mary. *Reclaiming Narrative for Public Theology.* Albany: State University of New York Press, 2004.

Draper, Alison Stark. *Pastor André Trocmé: Spiritual Leader of the French Village of Le Chambon.* New York: Rosen Publishing Group, 2001.

Dubois, Henri. "Les communautés catholiques du Plateau." In *Le Plateau Vivarais-Lignon*, edited by Pierre Bolle. Le Chambon-sur-Lignon: Société d' Histoire de la Montagne, 1992.

Dyck, Peter J. "André Trocmé Is Dead." Announcement written for the Mennonite News Service. June 18, 1971. André Trocmé and Magda Trocmé Papers. Swarthmore College Peace Collection. Swarthmore, PA.

Dykstra, Craig R. *Growing In the Life of Faith: Education and Christian Practices*. 2nd ed. Louisville: Geneva Press, 1999.

Ericksen, Robert and Susan Heschel, eds. *Betrayal: German Churches and the Holocaust*. Minneapolis: Augsburg Fortress, 1999.

Fackre, Gabriel. *The Christian Story: A Narrative Interpretation of Basic Christian Doctrine*. 3rd ed. Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1996.

Fodor, James and Stanley Hauerwas. "Performing Faith: The Peaceable Rhetoric of God's Church." In *Performing the Faith: Bonhoeffer and the Practice of Nonviolence.* Grand Rapids: Brazos Press, 2004

Fogelman, Eva. *Conscience and Courage: Rescuers of Jews during the Holocaust.* New York: Random House, 1995.

Fox, Deborah. "Magda Trocmé: A Mother Responds 'Hineni!'," *Shofar: An Interdisciplinary Journal of Jewish Studies* 24, no. 3 (Spring 2006): 90-99.

Frei, Hans. *The Eclipse of Biblical Narrative: A Study in Eighteenth and Nineteenth Century Hermeneutics.* Chelsea, MI: BookCrafters, 1974.

———. *Theology and Narrative: Selected Essays.* Edited by George Hunsinger and William C. Placher. New York: Oxford University Press, 1993.

Gallin, Mary Alice. *Ethical and Religious Factors in the German Resistance to Hitler.* Washington, D.C.: Catholic University of America Press, 1955.

Garbury-Vogel, Carole. *We Shall Not Forget: Memories of the Holocaust*. Lexington, MA: Temple Isaiah of Lexington, 1994.

Gilbert, Martin. *The Righteous: The Unsung Heroes of the Holocaust*. New York: Henry Holt, 2003.

Goh, Jeffrey C. K. *Christian Tradition Today: A Postliberal Vision of Church and World.* Grand Rapids: Wm. B. Eerdmans, 2004.

Goldberg, Michael. *Theology and Narrative: A Critical Introduction.* Nashville: Abingdon Press, 1982.

Goldhagen, Daniel J. *Hitler's Willing Executioners: Ordinary Germans and the Holocaust.* New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 1996.

González, Justo L. *The Reformation to the Present Day.*Vol. 2 of *The Story of Christianity*. San Francisco: HarperCollins, 1985.

Gossels, Lisa and Dean Wetherell. "The Children of the Chabannes." DVD. New Video Group, 2005.

Gottfried, Ted. *Heroes of the Holocaust.* Brookfield, CT: Twenty-First Century Books, 2001.

Grant, A. J. *The Huguenots.* 1934. Reprint, Hamden, CT: Archon Books, 1969.

Gray, Janet Glenn. *The French Huguenots: Anatomy of Courage.* Grand Rapids: Baker Book House, 1981.

Greengrass, Mark. *The French Reformation.* Oxford: Blackwell, 1987.

Grenz, Stanley J. *The Moral Quest: Foundations of Christian Ethics*. Downers Grove, Il: InterVarsity Press, 1997.

Guder, Darrell L. *Be My Witnesses: The Church's Mission, Message and Messengers.* William B. Eerdmans, 1985.

———. *The Continuing Conversion of the Church.* Grand Rapids: William B. Eerdmans, 2000.

———. *The Incarnation and the Church's Witness.* Eugene, OR: Wipf & Stock Publishers, 2005.

Guder, Darrell L., ed. Lois Barrett, Inagrace T. Dietterich, George R. Hunsberger, Alan J. Roxburgh, Craig Van Gelder. *Missional Church: A Vision for the Sending of the Church in North America*. Grand Rapids: William B. Eerdmans, 1998.

Gushee, David P. *The Righteous Gentiles of the Holocaust: A Christian Interpretation*. Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 1994.

Hallie, Philip, P. "From Cruelty to Goodness." *The Hastings Center Report* 11 (1981): 26-27.

———. *Lest Innocent Blood Be Shed: The Story of the Village of Le Chambon and How Goodness Happened There*. New York: Harper & Row, 1979.

———. *Tales of Good and Evil, Help and Harm*. New York: HarperCollins, 1997.

Halter, Marek. *Stories of Deliverance*. Chicago: Open Court, 1998.

Hauerwas, Stanley. *After Christendom? How the Church Is to Behave If Freedom, Justice, and a Christian Nation Are Bad Ideas*. Nashville: Abingdon Press, 1991.

———. *Against the Nations: War and Survival in a Liberal Society*. Notre Dame: University of Notre Dame Press, 1992.

———. *A Better Hope: Resources for a Church Confronting Capitalism, Democracy, and Postmodernity*. Grand Rapids: Brazos Press, 2000.

———. *Character and the Christian Life: A Study in Theological Ethics*. Notre Dame: University of Notre Dame Press, 1989.

———. *Christian Existence Today: Essays on Church, World, and Living in Between*. Grand Rapids: Brazos Press, 2001.

———. *A Community of Character: Toward a Constructive Christian Social Ethic*. Notre Dame: University of Notre Dame Press, 1981.

———. *The Hauerwas Reader*. Edited by Jonh Berkman and Michael Cartwright. Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 2001.

———. *In Good Company: The Church as Polis*. Notre Dame: University of Notre Dame Press, 1997.

———. "On Being a Church Capable of Addressing a World at War: A Pacifist Response to the United Methodist Bishops' Pastoral *in Defense of Creation* (1988)." In *The Hauerwas Reader*, edited by John Berkman and Michael Cartwright, 426-458. Durham: Duke University Press, 2001.

———. *The Peaceable Kingdom: A Primer in Christian Ethics*. Notre Dame: University of Notre Dame Press, 1991.

———. *Performing the Faith: Bonhoeffer and the Practice of Nonviolence*. Grand Rapids: Brazos Press, 2004.

———. "Reforming Christian Social Ethics: Ten Theses (1981)." In *The Hauerwas Reader*, edited by John Berkmann and Michael Cartwright, 111-115. Durham: Duke University Press, 2001.

———. *Sanctify Them in the Truth: Holiness Exemplified.* Edinburgh: T & T Clark, 1998.

———. "The Servant Community: Christian Social Ethics (1983)." In *The Hauerwas Reader*, edited by John Berkman and Michael Cartwright, 371-391. Durham: Duke University Press, 2001.

———. "Vision, Stories, and Character." In *The Hauerwas Reader*, edited by John Berkman and Michael Cartwright, 371-391. Durham: Duke University Press, 2001.

———. *Vision and Virtue: Essays in Christian Ethical Reflection.* Notre Dame: University of Notre Dame Press, 1981.

———, ed. *The Wisdom of the Cross: Essays in Honor of John Howard Yoder.* Grand Rapids: Wm. B. Eerdmans, 1999.

Hauerwas, Stanley and L. Gregory Jones, eds. *Why Narrative? Readings in Narrative Theology.* Eugene, OR: Wipf and Stock, 1997.

Hauerwas, Stanley and Charles Pinches. *Christians among the Virtues: Theological Conversations with Ancient and Modern Ethics.* Notre Dame: University of Notre Dame Press, 1997.

Hauerwas, Stanley and Romand Coles. *Christianity, Democracy, and the Radical Ordinary: Conversations Between a Radical Democrat and a Christian.* Eugene, OR: Wipf & Stock Publishers, 2008.

Hauerwas, Stanley and William H. Willimon. *Resident Aliens: Life in the Christian Colony.* Nashville: Abingdon Press, 1989.

Hays, Richard. "Ecclesiology and Ethics in 1 Corinthians." *Ex Auditu* 10 (1994): 31-43.

Henry, Patrick. "Banishing the Coercion of Despair: Le Chambon-Sur-Lignon and the Holocaust Today." *Shofar: An Interdisciplinary Journal of Jewish Studies* 20, no. 2 (2001): 69-84.

———. "Daniel's Choice: Daniel Trocmé (1912-1944)." *The French Revue* 74, no. 4 (April 2001): 728-39.

———. "Madeleine Dreyfus: Jewish Activity, Righteous Jews." *Logos* 7:1 (Winter 2004).

———. "Rescuing the Rescuers in Philip Hallie's Ethical Sublime." *Philosophy and Literature* 27, no. 1 (April 2003).

———. *We Only Know Men: The Rescue of Jews in France During the Holocaust*. Washington, D.C.: The Catholic University Press, 2007.

Hershberger, Michele. *A Christian View of Hospitality: Expecting Surprises*. Scottdale, PA: Herald Press, 1999.

Hewett, Nelly Trocmé. "Before You Read These Stories . . . ." In *Angels and Donkeys: Tales for Christmas and Other Times*, translated by Nelly Trocmé Hewett, 1-2. Intercourse, PA: Good Books,1998.

"Histoire des débuts du Collège Cévenol." *College Cévenole.* Chambon-sur-Lignon: Fondation André Trocmé, 1972. Quoted in Christine Van der Zanden. "The Plateau of Hospitality: Jewish Refugee Life on the Plateau Vivarais-Lignon." PhD diss., Clark University, 2003.

Huneke, Douglas K. *The Stones Will Cry Out: Pastoral Reflections on the Shoah (with Liturgical Resources)*. Contributions to the Study of Religion 39, edited by Carol Rittner and John Roth. Westport, CT: Greenwood Press, 1995.

Hunsinger, George. *Disruptive Grace: Studies in the Theology of Karl Barth.* Grand Rapids: Wm. B. Eerdmans, 2000.

Hütter, Reinhard. *Bound to Be Free: Evangelical Catholic Engagements in Ecclesiology, Ethics, and Ecumenism.* Grand Rapids: William B. Eerdmans, 2004.

———. *Suffering Divine Things: Theology as Church Practice.* Translated by Doug Stott. Grand Rapids: William B. Eerdmans, 2000.

Inge, John. *A Christian Theology of Place: Exploration in Practical, Pastoral, and Empirical Theology.* Burlington, VT: Ashgate Publishing Company, 2003.

Israels Perry, Elisabeth. *From Theology to History: French Religious Controversy and the Revocation of the Edict of Nantes*. The Hague: Martinus Nijhoff, 1973.

Kamitsuka, David. *Theology and Contemporary Culture: Liberation, Postliberal and Revisionary*

Perspectives. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1999.

Keizer, Garret. *Help: The Original Human Dilemma*. New York: HarperCollins, 2004.

Kingdon, Robert M. *Geneva and the Consolidation of the French Protestant Movement, 1564-1572: A Contribution to the History of Congregationalism, Presbyterianism, and Calvinist Resistance Theory*. Madison, WI: University of Wisconsin Press, 1967.

Kraybill, Donald. *The Upside-Down Kingdom*. Scottdale, PA: Herald Press, 1971.

Lazare, Lucien. *Rescue as Resistance: How Jewish Organizations Fought the Holocaust in France*. New York: Columbia University Press, 1996.

Leddy, Mary Jo. Foreword to *Quiet Heroes: True Stories of the Rescue of Jews by Christians in Nazi-occupied Holland*, by André Stein. New York: New York University Press, 1988.

Liebmann, Hanne Hirsch. Interview Transcript. Le Chambon-sur-Lignon – Personal History. United States Holocaust Memorial Museum. http:www.ushmm.org/wlc/en/media_oi.php?ModuleId=10007518&MediaId=2527 (accessed October 20, 2010).

Liechty, Daniel. *Theology in Postliberal Perspective*. Philadelphia: Trinity Press International, 1990.

Lindbeck, George A. "The Church." In *The Church in a Postliberal Age*, edited by James J. Buckley, 145-165. Grand Rapids: William B. Eerdmans, 2002.

———. *The Nature of Doctrine: Religion and Theology in a Postliberal Age*. Louisville: Westminster John Knox Press, 1984.

Littell, Franklin and Hubert G. Locke, eds. *The German Church Struggle and the Holocaust*. Detroit: Wayne State University Press, 1974.

Lofink, Gerhard. *Does God Need the Church? Toward a Theology of the People of God*. Collegeville, MN: Liturgical, 1999.

Long, D. Stephen. *The Goodness of God: Theology, Church, and the Social Order*. Grand Rapids: Brazos Press, 2001.

Maber, Lesley. *Bundle of the Living*. André Trocmé and Magda Trocmé Papers. Swarthmore College Peace Collection. Swarthmore, PA.

MacIntyre, Alasdair. *After Virtue*. 2nd ed. Notre Dame: University of Notre Dame Press, 1984.

———. *Whose Justice? Which Rationality?* Notre Dame: University of Notre Dame Press, 1988.

Matas, Carol. *Greater than Angels*. New York: Aladdin Paperbacks, 1999.

McClendon, James William Jr. *Biography as Theology: How Life Stories Can Remake Today's Theology*. Nashville: Abingdon Press, 1974.

———. *Doctrine: Systematic Theology*. Vol. 2. Nashville: Abingdon Press, 1994.

———. *Ethics: Systematic Theology*. Vol. 1. 2nd ed. Nashville: Abingdon Press, 2002.

———. *Witness: Systematic Theology*. Vol. 3. Nashville: Abingdon Press, 2000.

McGrath, Alister E. *A Life of John Calvin*. Oxford: Blackwell, 1990.

Metz, Johann Baptiste. *Faith in History and Society: Toward a Practical Fundamental Theology*. Translated by David Smith. New York: Seabury, 1980.

Moore, Charles E. Introduction to *Jesus and the Nonviolent Revolution*, by André Trocmé. Rev. and expanded ed. Maryknoll, NY: Orbis Books, 2003.

Monroe, Kristen Renwick. *The Heart of Altruism: Perceptions of a Common Humanity*. Princeton, N.J.: Princeton University Press, 2004.

Muller, Richard A. *The Unaccommodated Calvin: Studies in the Foundation of a Theological Tradition*. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2000.

Murphy, Nancey, Brad J. Kallenberg, and Mark Thiessen Nation, eds. *Virtues and Practices in the Christian Tradition: Christian Ethics after MacIntyre*. Notre Dame: University of Notre Dame Press, 1997.

Nation, Mark. "A Comprehensive Bibliography of the Writings of John Howard Yoder." *Mennonite Quarterly Review* 71 (1997): 93-145.

———. "Living in Another World as One Response to Relativism." In *Theology without Foundations: Religious Practice and the Future of Theological Truth*, edited by Nancey Murphy, Stanley Hauerwas, and Mark Nation, 229-44. Nashville: Abingdon Press, 1994.

Nation, Mark Thiessen and Samuel Wells, eds. *Faithfulness and Fortitude: In Conversation with the Theological Ethics of Stanley Hauerwas.* Edinburgh: T & T Clark Publishers, 2000.

Newman, Elizabeth. *Untamed Hospitality: Welcoming God and Other Strangers.* Grand Rapids: Brazos Press, 2007.

Nouwen, Henri J. M., Donald P. McNeill, and Douglas A. Morrison. *Compassion: A Reflection on the Christian Life*. New York: Image Books / Doubleday, 1982.

Oberman, Heiko, A. *De Erfenis van Calvijn: Grootheid en Grenzen*. Kampen: J. H. Kok, 1988.

———. "Europa afflicta: The Reformation of the Refugees," *Archiv für Reformationsgeschichte* 83 (1992): 91-111.

———. *The Reformation: Roots and Ramifications.* Grand Rapids: William B. Eerdmans, 1994.

———. *The Roots of Anti-Semitism: In the Age of Renaissance and Reformation*. Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1984.

———. *The Two Reformations: The Journey from the Last Days to the New World.* Edited by Donald Weinstein. New Haven: Yale University Press, 2003.

Oden, Amy G., ed. *And You Welcomed Me: A Sourcebook on Hospitality in Early Christianity*. Nashville: Abingdon Press, 2001.

Oliner, Samuel and Pearl Oliner. *The Altruistic Personality*. New York: The Free Press, 1988.

Paldiel, Mordecai. *The Righteous Among the Nations: Rescuers of Jews During the Holocaust.* Jerusalem: The Jerusalem Publishing House and Yad Vashem, 2007.

———. *Saving the Jews: Amazing Stories of Men and Women Who Defied the "Final Solution".* Rockville, MD: Schreiber Publishing, 2000.

Phayer, Michael. *The Catholic Church and the Holocaust, 1930-1965.* Bloomington, IN: Indiana University Press, 2000.

Pipher, Mary. *The Shelter of Each Other: Rebuilding Our Families*. New York: Ballantine Books, 1996.

———. "Welcoming the Stranger: What Hospitality Teaches Us About Justice." *Sojourners*. July–August 1999.

Placher, William C. *The Triune God: An Essay in Postliberal Theology*. Louisville: Westminster John Knox, 2007.

"The Plateau Vivarais-Lignon: 1939-1944: Hospitality, Rescue, and Resistance." Exhibit. Text prepared by Annik Flaud. Le Chambon-sur-Lignon, France. Center for Holocaust and Genocide Studies, University of Minnesota. http://www.chgs.umn.edu/histories/#surLignon (accessed June 21, 2010).

Phillips, Timothy R. and Dennis L. Okholm, eds. *The Nature of Confession: Evangelicals and Postliberals in Conversation*. Downers Grove, IL: Intervarsity Press, 1996.

Pinches, Charles. "Christian Pacifism and Theodicy: The Free Will Defense in the Thought of John H Yoder." *Modern Theology* 5 (1989): 239-55.

Pohl, Christine D. *Making Room: Recovering Hospitality as a Christian Tradition*. Grand Rapids: William B. Eerdmans Publishing Company, 1999.

Poujol, Jacques. *Protestants dans la France en Guerre, 1939-1945*. Paris: Les Éditions de Paris, 2000.

Powell, Samuel and Michael Lodahl. *Embodied Holiness: Toward a Corporate Theology of Spiritual Growth*. Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press, 1999.

Ramsey, Paul. *The Just War: Force and Political Responsibility*. New ed. Lanham, MD: Rowman & Littlefield, 2002.

Reilly, Kevin, Stephen Kaufman, and Angela Bodino, eds. *Racism: A Global Reader*. Armonk, NY: M. E. Sharpe, 2002.

Ringle, Ken. "Trail to Le Chambon: World War II Survivor Elizabeth Koenig's Remarkable Journey." *The Washington Post*, January 19, 1990.

Rittner, Carol and Sondra Myers, eds. *The Courage to Care: Rescuers of Jews During the Holocaust*. New York: New York University Press, 1986.

Rittner, Carol, Stephen D. Smith, and Irena Steinfeldt, eds. *The Holocaust and the Christian World: Reflections on the Past, Challenges for the Future*. New York: Continuum, 2000.

Rochat, François and André Modigliani. "The Ordinary Quality of Resistance: From Milgram's Laboratory to the Village of Le Chambon." *Journal of Social Issues* 51 (1995): 195-212.

Roche, Owen I. A. *The Days of the Upright: A History of the Huguenots*. New York: C. N. Potter, 1965.

Rothrock, George A. *The Huguenots: A Biography of a Minority*. Chicago: Nelson Hall, 1979.

Rubenstein, Richard L. and John K. Roth. *Approaches to Auschwitz: The Holocaust and Its Legacy*. 2nd ed. Louisville: Westminster John Knox Press, 2003.

Russell, Letty. "Hot-House Ecclesiology: Christianity as a Place of Safety and Comfort." *The Ecumenical Review* 53, no. 1 (2001): 48-56.

Sauvage, Pierre. "Le Chambon's Challenge Today." *Forward*, October 9, 2004.

———. "A Most Persistent Haven: Le Chambon-Sur-Lignon: The story of 5,000 who would not be bystanders- and of 5,000 more." *Moment*, October 1983.

———. "Ten Questions." In *The Courage to Care: Rescuers of Jews During the Holocaust*, edited by Carol Rittner, R.S.M. and Sondra Myers, 135-141. New York: New York University Press, 1986.

———. *Weapons of the Spirit*. DVD. Los Angeles: The Chambon Foundation, 1989.

Schmemann, Alexander. *For the Life of the World*. Crestwood, NY: St Vladimir's Seminary Press, 1973.

Scholder, Klaus. *Das Jahr der Ernüchterung 1934*. Vol. 2 of *Die Kirchen und das Dritte Reich*. Berlin: Ullstein, 1985.

———. *Vorgeschichte und Zeit der Illusionen 1918-1934*. Vol. 1 of *Die Kirchen und das Dritte Reich*. Frankfurt: Ullstein, 1977.

Schulweis, Rabbi Harold M. Foreword to *The Altruistic Personality: Rescuers of Jews in Nazi Europe*, by Pearl and Samuel Oliner. New York: The Free Press, 1988.

Schuste, Ekkehard and Reinhold Boschert-Kimmig. *Hope Against Hope: Johann Baptist Metz and Elie Wiesel Speak Out on the Holocaust*. Translated by J. Matthew Ashley. Mahwah, NJ: Paulist Press, 1999.

Société d' Histoire de la Montagne. *Les Résistances Sur Le Plateau Vivarais-Lignon (1938-1945): Témoins, témoignages et lieux de memoires. Les oubliés de l'histoire parlent*. Editions de Roure, 2005.

Stone, Bryan P. *Evangelism after Christendom: The Theology and Practice of Christian Witness*. Grand Rapids: Brazos Press, 2007.

Stroup, George W. "Narrative Theology." In *A New Handbook of Christian Theology*, edited by Donald W. Musser and Joseph L. Price, 323-327. Nashville: Abingdon Press, 1992.

Sutherland, N. M. *The Huguenot Struggle for Recognition*. New Haven: Yale University Press, 1980.

Tanner, Kathryn. *Theories of Culture: A New Agenda for Theology*. Minneapolis: Augsburg Fortress, 1997.

Tedeschi, Richard G., Crystal Park, and Lawrence Calhoun. *Posttraumatic Growth: Positive Changes in the Aftermath of Crisis*. Mahwah, NJ: Lawrence Erlbaum Associates, 1998.

Théis, Edouard. "André Trocmé." *Reconciliation.* (1976): 25-30. André Trocmé and Magda Trocmé Papers. Swarthmore College Peace Collection. Swarthmore, PA.

Thomas, Laurence Mordekhai. *Vessels of Evil: American Slavery and the Holocaust*. Philadelphia: Temple University Press, 1993.

Trocmé, André. *Angels and Donkeys: Tales for Christmas and Other Times*. Translated by Nelly Trocmé Hewett. Intercourse, PA: Good Books, 1998.

———. *Jesus and the Nonviolent Revolution*. Rev. and expanded ed. Edited by Charles E. Moore. Maryknoll, NY: Orbis Books, 2003.

———. Mémoires. André Trocmé and Magda Trocmé Papers. Swarthmore College Peace Collection. Swarthmore, PA.

———. *The Politics of Repentance*. Translated by John Clark. New York: Fellowship Publishing, 1953.

Trocmé, André and Édouard Theis. Sermon of June 23, 1940, from the Magda and André Trocmé Papers, Swarthmore College Library, Peace Collection. Quoted in André Trocmé, *Jesus and the Nonviolent Revolution*. Rev. and expanded ed. Edited by Charles E. Moore. Maryknoll, NY: Orbis Books, 2003.

Trocmé, Magda, Madeleine Barot, Pierre Fayol, and O. Rosowsky. "Le Myth de commandant SS protecteur des Juifs." *Le Monde Juif*, April-June 1988.

United States Holocaust Memorial Museaum. "Artifact: Bible from Le Chambon pastor who saved Jews." *Holocaust Encyclopedia.* http://www.ushmm.org/wlc/en/media_da.php?MediaId=100 (accessed October 20, 2010).

Ury, William. *The Third Side: Why We Fight and How We Can Stop.* New York: Penguin, 2000.

U.S. Catholic Bishops. *The Challenge of Peace: God's Promise and Our Response.* Washington, DC: United States Catholic Conference, 1983.

Van der Zanden, Christine. "The Plateau of Hospitality: Jewish Refugee Life on the Plateau Vivarais-Lignon." PhD diss., Clark University, 2003.

Van Ruymbeke, Bertrand and Randy J. Sparks, eds. *Memory and Identity: The Huguenots in France and the Atlantic Diaspora.* Columbia, SC: University of South Carolina Press, 2003.

Vidu, Adonis. *Postliberal Theological Method.* Paternoster, 2007.

Volf, Miroslav. *Exclusion and Embrace: A Theological Exploration of Identity, Otherness, and Reconciliation.* Nashville: Abingdon, 1996.

Wagner, Meir, Moshe Meisels, Andréas C. Fischer, and Graham Buik. *The Righteous of Switzerland: Heroes of the Holocaust.* Jersey City: Ktav Publishing House, 2000.

Weaver, Alain Epp. "Parables of the Kingdom and Religious Plurality: With Barth and Yoder toward a Nonresistant Public Theology." *Mennonite Quarterly Review* 72 (1998): 411-40.

Wells, Samuel. *Transforming Fate Into Destiny: The Theological Ethics of Stanley Hauerwas.* Eugene, OR: Cascade Books, 1998.

Wendel, François. *Calvin: The Origins and Development of His Religious Thought.* Translated by Philip Mariet. London: Collins, 1963.

Westerhoff, Caroline A. "Boundary and Hospitality." *Christian Reflection: A Series in Faith and Ethics* (2007). http://www.baylor.edu/content/services/document.php/53385.pdf (accessed June 28, 2010).

Wiesel, Elie. *The Town Beyond the Wall.* New York: Avon Books, 1969.

Williamson, Clark M. *A Guest in the House of Israel: Post-Holocaust Church Theology*. Louisville: Westminster/John Knox Press, 1993.

Wink, Walter. *The Powers That Be: A Theology for a New Millennium*. New York: Doubleday, 1998.

Wright, N.T. *After You Believe: Why Christian Character Matters*. New York: HarperCollins, 2010.

Yoder, John Howard. *Body Politics: Five Practices of the Christian Community before the Watching World*. Scottdale, PA: Herald Press, 2001.

———. *The Christian Witness to the State*. Newton, KS: Faith and Life Press, 1964.

———. *For the Nations: Essays Public and Evangelical.* Grand Rapids: William B. Eerdmans, 1997.

———. *The Fullness of Christ*. Elgin, IL: Brethren Press, 1987.

———. *He Came Preaching Peace*. Scottdale, PA: Herald Press, 1985.

———. *The Jewish-Christian Schism Revisited.* Edited by Michael G. Cartwright and Peter Ochs. Grand Rapids: William B. Eerdmans, 2003.

———. *Karl Barth and the Problem of War*. Nashville: Abingdon Press, 1970.

———. *Nevertheless; a Meditation on the Varieties and Shortcomings of Religious Pacifism*. Scottdale, PA: Herald Press, 1971.

———. "On Not Being Ashamed of the Gospel: Particularity, Pluralism, and Validation." *Faith and Philosophy* 9, no. 3: 285-300.

———. *The Original Revolution; Essays on Christian Pacifism*. Scottdale, PA: Herald Press, 1972.

———. *The Politics of Jesus: Vicit Agnus Noster*. Grand Rapids: William B. Eerdmans 1972.

———. *Preface to Theology : Christology and Theological Method*. Grand Rapids: Brazos Press, 2002.

———. *The Priestly Kingdom : Social Ethics as Gospel*. Notre Dame: University of Notre Dame Press, 1984.

———. *Reinhold Niebuhr and Christian Pacifism*. Washington, D.C.: The Church Peace Mission, 1966.

———. *The Royal Priesthood : Essays Ecclesiological and Ecumenical*. Grand Rapids: William B. Eerdmans, 1994.

———. *What Would You Do?: A Serious Answer to a Standard Question*. Scottdale, PA: Herald Press, 1992.

———. *When War Is Unjust: Being Honest in Just-War Thinking*. 2nd ed. Maryknoll, NY: Orbis Books, 1996.

Yoder, John Howard, Glen Harold Stassen, Diane M. Yeager, and H. Richard Niebuhr. *Authentic Transformation: A New Vision of Christ and Culture*. Nashville: Abingdon Press, 1996.

Zapruder, Alexandra. *Salvaged Pages: Young Writers Diaries of the Holocaust*. New Haven: Yale University Press, 2002.

Zasloff, Tela. *A Rescuer's Story: Pastor Pierre-Charles Toureille in Vichy France*. Madison, WI: The University of Wisconsin Press, 2003.

Zimbelman, Joel. "The Contribution of John Howard Yoder to Recent Discussions in Christian Social Ethics." *Scottish Journal of Theology* 45, no. 3 (1992): 367-99.

Zuccotti, Susan. "Le Chambon: The Town with a Conscience." In *The Complete History of the Holocaust*, edited by Mitchell G. Bard. San Diego: Greenhaven Press, 2001.

———. *The Holocaust, the French and the Jews*. New York: HarperCollins, 1993.